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BEING A SERIES OF LECTURES
ON THE PRODIGAL SON

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R. G. ROSCAMP, D.D.

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BEING A SERIES OF LECTURES ON

THE PRODIGAL SON



BY

REV. R. G. ROSCAMP, D.D.

Given by Disciples' Divinity House

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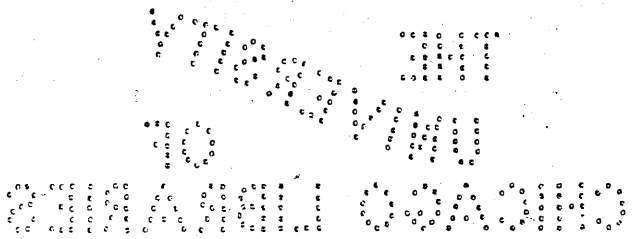
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INTRODUCTORY CHAPTER.

"And He spake a Parable."—Luke XV. Chap., 11-33.

THIS illustrious Parable of our Saviour's presents unto us a very beautiful and affecting scene, wherein it is difficult to determine whether the variety of matter, just proportions of the particulars, or the natural order of things do more to vie with each other; but all conspire to fill the imagination and affect the heart.

It is no wonder that artists have seized this Parable to represent this magnificent domestic scene! This Parable has been described by a learned scholar as "The most remarkable of Parables delivered by Our Saviour, as being the most passionate and affecting, clothed and adorned with the most lively colors, and beautiful similitudes."

The question naturally arises, "What was the intention or design of Our Lord in the Parable?" If we attentively survey the whole plan, we find in the general, that herein is traced

the journey of the children of Israel from Egyptian servitude to the land of promise, through a troublesome and disconsolate wilderness, to a region of rejoicing and plenty.

We also discover the unhappy course of a sinful race, through a servitude of sin and suffering, to a grand and glorious recovery, an exaltation from earth to heaven.

Why did Jesus speak in Parables?

We perceive in reading ancient literature that it was the general custom of Wise Men to deliver their sentiments after this manner, and this is especially seen in the Holy Scriptures.

In the famous Oracles of the Greeks, we find much that is mysterious and obscure in consequence of their figurative language. As to the Sacred Writings of the Old Testament, we behold plainness and perspicuity in all that is necessary for rules of right living; yet the Prophets frequently made use of metaphors—allegories, and other figurative forms of speech, which must needs be attended with obscurity, and which seem as a veil drawn over the face of Divine Truth.

For instance, Solomon speaks of the words of the wise, and compares them "like apples of

gold in pictures of silver," that is, besides having an outside truth and beauty, they have a more rich and precious meaning within.

The same will apply to the New Testament.

Jesus Christ adopted the method of instruction so rare, so stimulating, so full of interest,—a method which in its unapproachable beauty and finish, stands unrivalled in the annals of human speech, would doubtless tend to increase beyond measure the crowds that thronged to listen to Him.

In the Parable of "The Prodigal Son" there lies the whole Gospel in its richest and tenderest grace.

Never certainly in human language was so much love and wisdom and tenderness compressed into such small compass.

Every line, every touch of the picture, is full of beautiful eternal significance. The Prodigal's presumptuous claim for all that life could give him, the leaving of the old home, the journey into a far country, the brief spasm of enjoyment there, the mighty famine in that land, the premature exhaustion of all that could make life noble and endurable, the awful degradation and unutterable misery that followed, the

coming to himself, and the recollection of all that he had left behind, the return to his home in broken-hearted penitence and deep humility, the father's far off sight of him, and the gush of compassion and tenderness of that father, the ringing joy of the whole household over him who had been loved and lost, but now found, the unjust jealousy and mean complaint of the Elder Brother, and then that close of the Parable in a strain of music, "Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine. It was meet that we should make merry and be glad, for this thy brother was dead and is alive again, was lost and is found,"—all this is indeed a divine epitome of the wanderings of man and the love of God, such as no literature has ever heard elsewhere.

Put in the scale all that "Confucius," or "Zoroaster," or "Socrates" ever wrote or said, and they wrote and said many beautiful things; and put in the other scale the Parable of "The Prodigal Son" alone, with all that this simple Parable describes, and can any candid mind doubt which scale would outweigh the other in eternal preciousness, in divine adaption to the want of mankind?

But what reason can be given for "The Use

of Figurative Expression?" So far as Pagan mysteries are concerned we may say that it was to the interest of their writers to hide those things from the light that could not endure a fair and honest trial.

But again. A great many of their Philosophers aimed at procuring a veneration for their own persons rather than to benefit the world, and would labor rather to appear wise than attempt to make others so.

But if these were the motives of the ancient Philosophers, why did the Sacred Writers adopt this style?

Several reasons may be assigned.

First.—Because Divine Wisdom saw fit in the infancy of the world to exhibit a Revelation of His Mind and Will suitable to the capacity of men, and the age in which they lived, reserving the more adequate delivery of Himself in the fullness of time, when men would be more capable of grasping the deeper truths.

Second.—Another reason.—"The apparent obscurity of the word allured men to a diligent inquiry."

St. Justin, the Philosopher and Martyr, said: "The Prophets did cover the things they

delivered under Types and Parables, so that it was not easy for every one to understand many of those things of which they spoke, and in order that they might induce men to exercise the diligence and study of those that applied themselves to their instruction."

Third.—Another reason for this Figurative Form of Expression was, because whatever was represented ino this form was apt to work more powerfully upon them, and gain their attention.

Thus we find that the mind was not only addressed, but truth was set forth in such lively colors as to engage the imagination, arouse the passions,—help the memory, and gain the affections.

These considerations will to some extent account for that figurative form of expression which we observe in the Old Testament, and to some extent also found in the New.

But why did Our Saviour come to use this parabolical style to such an extent; so that the Evangelist said: "Without a Parable spake He not unto them?"

First.—"Jesus Christ used this Form of Expression because the Jews to whom Christ came had always been trained in Allegorical style,

and held it in such esteem that they thought no man fit to teach that could not shade his sense by allegory."

Thus we find indications of Christ's Wisdom in marvelously adapting His discourses to the minds and habits of the Jews.

Second.—Again.—"Our Saviour Himself gives as a peculiar reason for this practice in these words: 'To you (the disciples) it is given to understand the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them (the Jews) it is not given.' 'Therefore speak I to them in Parables, because they seeing see not, and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand.'"

Third.—Again.—"Jesus Christ had recourse to this form of Speech because in many cases it appealed to men's consciences, and carried conviction with it better than other forms of speech."

The Parables of Our Lord were generally taken from the common affairs of life, and founded upon experience or acknowledged maxims; and having assented to the form of speech, were afterward surprised at the aptness of the application.

Our Saviour on several occasions entirely cir-

cumvented the Pharisees in parable as in a net, having accepted the premises they were bound to accept the conclusion.

These reasons will, I doubt not, "justify the application of the Parable of The Prodigal Son" in the following pages.

We shall endeavour to guard against obtruding on any doctrine under the form of similitude, or figure; but whatever point is raised shall be grounded upon Scriptural authority.

Let us now inquire—"What was the Occasion of this Parable known as The Prodigal Son?"

It is a rule amongst expositers to look attentively on the occasion, and from the origin to judge of the scope and tendency of the discourse, and this is especially requisite in the interpretation of figurative expression.

Now in order to discover the true occasion of this Parable, we must observe, that it was the lot of the Lord Jesus Christ to be severely accused by the Jews, and His Wondrous Words and Works were said by them to have been produced by an evil agency.

The system of Christian faith which Christ came to establish, and whose fundamental doctrines were Righteousness and Truth; yet it was

nevertheless violently opposed and viciously aspersed by different persons.

One class accuses the Christian system as being too difficult an institution, whilst another designated it a system of looseness and lawless liberty.

The former of these accusers have usually been a sort of loose pretenders to Christianity, who, because the Gospel required love to God with all the heart, and soul, and mind, and strength; and to live in good conscience toward God and man, and exhibit a true consistent life; they have said that "It is a Strict and Severe Law."

The other accusers of Christianity, and who complain of looseness, it is only just to say that this class of men must be absolute strangers to the Religious system they accuse, for Christianity is not only the purest system of doctrine, but it generates the highest and purest morality.

As an illustration of those Pagan ideas of Christianity, here is an instance. "When Constantine the Great" espoused the Christian Faith, the pagans, to ridicule both Christ and Religion, devised a tale. It is as follows:

"That Constantine, having cruelly murdered

his brother Crispus, and other near relatives, and feeling some remorse of conscience, applied to 'Sopater,' a Philosopher, and sought from him some way of expiation. But Sopater told him that philosophy afforded no remedy in such desperate cases.

"It is said that he then went to the Christian Bishops to find relief to his guilty conscience, and they prescribed a little baptismal water, and that this would wash out all that stain, and ease him of his trouble, and on finding that this religion could reconcile the gratification of troubled passions with a quiet mind, he became a Christian."

The falsity of this fictious story is seen in the fact that "Crispus" was alive long after "Constantine" became a Christian, and assisted him in making laws.

But in leaving the Pagans and coming to the Jews, we find, also, that they had dishonorable opinions of the Christian Religion as containing loose and licentious doctrines.

The Jews observed that Our Lord had no regard to their traditions, about which they were very scrupulous; and they also saw that Christ was a strict observer of the Law; yet in some

cases, such as the Sabbath, He made the letter of the Law reasonable and intelligible; hence the Jews became enraged against Him because He rejected Tradition and dissolved the Law.

They also heard the severe rebukes which Christ offered to the sanctimonious professions of the Pharisees, whose religion seemed as the standard of their faith.

The Jewish people seemed to have been confirmed in their hatred to Christ, when they saw the grave and serious Pharisees, the learned Scribes, the Chief Priests and Rulers, and the Zealots of their religion stood at a distance, and when they beheld those who resorted to Christ, and became His followers were generally persons of mean quality, and who had formerly been infamous in life and in conversation. "Then drew near unto Him all the Publicans and Sinners for to hear Him, and the Scribes and Pharisees murmured, saying, "This man receiveth sinners and eateth with them,"—whereupon the Saviour takes up this and other Parables.

This we take to be a true statement of the case, and which gave rise to this most excellent

discourse found in the 15th chapter in St. Luke's Gospel.

We now inquire—"What is meant by Father, Elder and Younger Brothers, as used in the Parable?"

It is generally accepted that by the Father in a mystical and figurative sense is meant *God Almighty*—"Father of Spirits,"—"the only true and wise God, of whom the whole family of heaven and earth is named."

But who should be the Two Sons has been, and still is with many, a difficult question. Some have contended that by the Elder Son was meant the higher order of Intellectual beings who had never forfeited their station or character; and by the Younger Son, the whole human race of mankind under Adam.

Again.—Another view is that by the Two Sons in this Parable is understood the Jews and Gentiles,—the Elder Brother representing the Jews, as God's ancient people; and that the Younger Brother represents the Gentiles, who ran on in a long course of Idolatry, and were estranged from God, until by the grace of God in the Gospel, they were admitted into the birthright and privileges of the Jews. It is probable

that Our Saviour, seeing the emulation likely to exist between these two ranks of mankind, might have respect to it, and deliver Himself suitably in this Parable; but this cannot be supposed to be the primary meaning, as the controversy between Jews and Gentiles about privileges had not yet arisen; but the question was whether Jews or Gentiles shoud be admitted to the hopes of pardon upon Repentance.

Hence, by the *Two Sons* must be understood any *Two Men,* whether Jew or Pagan, who as to piety and virtue have run a contrary course but at last meet at the same point of goodness.

The Elder Son representing those who, by the grace of God, had been preserved from flagrant, violent sin, and by previous education had been led by degrees in the ways of religion.

Such persons becoming sincerely good and living consistently with right, though they cannot see where or when they set out, the change not being so great, nor so sudden as the conversion of notorious sinners. Such a person was Obadiah, who says: "I Thy servant fear the Lord from my youth."—And Timothy, who from his youth was principled and indoctrinated with a sense of piety and religion.

Gregory Nazianzen said of his father that "he was a sheep of Christ's flock before he came into the fold, and a Christian before he came within the Church; the probity of his temper, and the singular virtues of his life, made him a Christian, as it were, by anticipation."

It is very evident, however, that there are some persons upon whom the grace of God takes early hold, and the Spirit of God dwelling in them, and their reason and religion, like warp and woof run together, making up a virtuous life.

The Lord Jesus speaks of men, "just men who need no repentance," this is, they have no need to make a change in their course, and begin anew, as sinners do,—and He says again:—"He that is washed, needeth not save to wash his feet only"—being engaged in holy service, has need only to daily cleansings.

It is, therefore, plain who the Elder Brother was, and we cannot fail to perceive who and what the Younger Brother also was. He stands as the representative of all that have run a race in sin, and are far away from the heavenly Father.

LOST AND FOUND.

CHAPTER I.

THE SON AT HOME.

"And a certain man had two sons. And the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living."—Luke XV., 11-12.

THIS Parable has been entitled "The Prodigal Son," though with more propriety it might have been termed "The Reformed Prodigal" (for the moral is founded on his reformation).

It is one of the most beautiful stories to be found in the language of men; whether we consider the characters, the style, the incidents, the sentiments, or the moral.

The characters are distinctly drawn, important, and interesting. They consist of three, *A father and his two sons.* The father is indulgent, placable, affectionate, and generous.

The elder son is austere, arrogant, selfish, and envious. The younger son is ardent, inconsiderate, profuse, and licentious; but afterward serious, penitent, and humble.

The style is simple, clear, and vivid. The incidents are various, and the sentiments striking. Though living happily under an affectionate parent, the younger son becomes impatient, even of the gentlest restraint, and eager to gratify his youthful passions. Hence he appeals to his father for the means whereby he may carry out his unruly desires.

"Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me." And the generous father divided unto them his living.

"The father was evidently a man of substance. It may be a fortunate or an unfortunate circumstance, as events may prove.

There may be nothing wrong in being a substantial man in society; yet the very fact of a man having great riches may be one of the greatest calamities that ever occurred in his life.

The younger son did not say, "Father, I am tired of a lazy, slothful life, and now I am determined to do something for my own bread. I have been turning over this great problem of

life in my own mind, and I find that life is a responsibility, life is a discipline, and though I have been born under circumstances of conspicuous advantage, yet I think it right to go out and do something to make my own position, to establish my own title, to be called and to be treated as a man."

What did the younger son say?

He said: "Father, I am a youth of fortune; please give me the portion of goods that falleth to me." He had been scheming, it appears, but scheming in a wrong direction. He had been planning in the direction of self-enjoyment; he was going out to taste the sweets of liberty; the time had come in his consciousness, when he thought that he would enjoy a little more freedom, and the first notion that occurred to him was to get clear of his father.

The father has stood in the way; the father's old-world notions have been impediments in the path of supposed progress and enjoyment and liberty; and the young man's great concern has been to get rid of his own father! It looks well, and the young man said: "Let me open a door in my father's house, go out into the wide world with the portion of goods that falleth to me, and

all will be sunshine and beauty, music and rest." It is evident that the young man was not a robust thinker; yet he was not to be blamed for having had very little experience of the world. He thought that life would be enjoyable if only he had liberty.

I propose now to follow him in his journeyings, to see what his experience was, to collect it for the advantage of all who need a Moral Exhortation upon this point, and to inquire at last whether there cannot be some better way of spending the days which God has put into our keeping as a trust.

In the case of the younger son we have a picture of man in his sinful state, in his efforts to get away from God, and to throw off all allegiance to Him.

The younger son said: "Give me the portion of goods that falleth to me," that is, "I want to get away from my father's restraint, my father's law, my father's oversight; I want to go my own way, and do as I please.

See here the root of all sin,— a desire of disposing of self; of independency on God.

It has been said, "that the whole of the Gospel is reflected in this Parable," and if this

is correct, we can easily see in the effort of the younger son asking for release from the fathers oversight and restraint a picture of man as he departs from God in thought and deed.

It is not the intention here to treat of "Original Sin," known as such by theologians; but to present it as a voluntary breach of a known law.

There are Three Rules by which men are made guilty, and by which any act may be known as sinful.

First.—By man going contrary to, and in violation of, a known Law. *Second.*—That the law so violated is such as might have been known to the transgressors. *Third.*—That the transgression is by the full consent of the Will.

As to the first rule, namely, that wherever there is sin there is a breach of some known law; hence we find that the word which we have rendered "Transgression," signifies "To pass the bounds, or transgress prefixed limits, and by this we mean the limits of known law." St. Paul says, "Where there is no law there is no transgression;" and St. John says, "He that sinneth transgresseth also the law; for sin is a transgression of the law."

Now the law of which Sin is a violation is

threefold in its nature *First.*—It is either the Law of Nature and Reason. *Second*—Or the divine Will, called Revelation. *Third.*—Or defying human authority, called Human Law.

These are the ways by which God has seen fit to lay obligation upon us. Whatever, therefore, is sin is a violation of the dictates of Reason, or Disobedience to the Will of God, or opposition to the power of human law.

In order, therefore, to render any action sinful it is not sufficient that some law be broken, unless that will be also thoroughly promulgated, or published. Otherwise it is no law.

But to render sin complete, and perfectly criminal, it is not enough that it be against some law, and that law known; but it must be a voluntary act, of his own free choice, that what he did, he did willingly, and could have done otherwise.

It must be a human act, produced by the power of the will, which is the helm of the Soul, and which determines all its decisions and acts, and is consequently accountable for them.

It is, therefore, clear that the necessary ingredient of sin is, that it is a voluntary act, or else why should God use exhortation,—reproof,—

and expostulation with men for sinning, if it were not in their power to withstand it.

Why should man be severely punished for doing that which he could not avoid?

"Necessity" (says Seneca) "is the great sanctuary of human infirmity, which whosoever can lay claim to, obtains all the faults it commits." The Romans had a saying that—"It is a free mind only which is capable of guilt; dull matter and whatever is passive cannot be blamed, because they cannot choose."

We must see according to this reasoning, that for any act to be sinful it must be contrary to the law which determines moral action, and it must be a Voluntary act.

The manner in which God has given His Laws to men have been various. Sometimes by an audible voice from heaven, as on Mt. Sinai, or by the inspiration of Prophets and Holy men; and making them interpreters of His Mind to the world.

But the most glorious proclamation of His Will to men was when He sent His Only Begotten Son into the world; "Who in the likeness of men proclaimed the law of His Father."

It is, therefore, evident that God has always

been pleased to make His Will sufficiently known, and never required obedience otherwise than in proportion to that will being manifested.

It is the teaching of history that men have ever been heard to say, "give me liberty without law, give me liberty without restraint, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me," as I want to do just as I please, and gratify every sense, even though all law must be violated.

What a picture is here presented! A kind and indulgent parent, who generously gives to his son of his earthly substance, and a son who has decided to rebel against that father, leave his household, and go out into the wide world to live in open violation of all law and government.

And how fitly does this represent the human race, who during all these centuries has received line upon line and precept upon precept,—here much and there much—and ten thousand blessings beside; and yet say—"We will not have this man reign over us."

CHAPTER II.

GOING AWAY FROM HOME.

"And the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance in riotous living."

THE "far country" to a Jew would probably be Egypt; and in Egypt there would be no city likely to attract a young spendthrift Jew as Alexandria, already three centuries old, and founded by Alexander himself.

Its luxury and refinement would have a great attraction for a young Jew with plenty of means, just as its splendid library would have a great attraction for the literary student, or the fact of its being the mart of the world make it extremely attractive to the merchant or business man.

We may, therefore, suppose that the young Jew made his way to Alexandria, and that he would be immensely fascinated by its palm and its orange groves, its blue sky and balmy air, its river that held the secret of its existence, with its wharves bearing the freight of corn for the

world; its bazaars and markets stored with goods from East and West.

We can easily understand how, for the first few days, he would join in the mighty concourse of people gathered from all lands as they poured to and fro in its great thoroughfares, or rested beneath those colonnades, or viewed with wonder those far-reaching obelisks, or enjoyed those splendid gardens with the plash of the fountain and the murmur of the rivulet.

How glad he would be to feast his eye, his imagination, and wonder on this perfect marvel of beauty and splendor.

It was a "far country," but it was a beautiful country for all that. And then we may imagine that when the first glamour and fascination had worn off, and he became somewhat accustomed to the great, fresh city, that he would find congenial society who would lead him on in his sinful course.

With the evil companions come the "lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life" and he rushes on to misery and ruin. The lust of the flesh, I say—of unclean passion and impure desire, by which a man whose nature was meant to be a shrine and a fane of God,

becomes a temple filled with vultures and unclean beasts and hideous things like those Ezekiel saw.

"The lust of the eye," which is the love of display, the lust Dante has so marvelously pilloried for us in his "Inferno," in which he tells us that the young exquisites who shod their horses with silver forbade their servants to pick up the shoe when it was dropped, and it was left behind.

"The pride of life," which is just the love of fashion, so that a young man sees that his dress is as elegant, his apartments as splendidly furnished, his menu for dinner as sumptuous, and his equipage as beautiful as those of his comrades.

We here see the progress of sin. The "far country" is always getting farther away. There is a moral volocity as well as a natural volocity, a hastening on to the brink of ruin, farther and farther away. "The young man took his journey into a far country." In the moral sense it indicates that the sinful man is far away from God, God is not in his thoughts.

There are seven steps to ruin.

1. *The First Step* as seen in the Prodigal

is Pride. He grew impatient in the domestic circle, and had an opinion of his own sufficiency; therefore, he came to his father and said: "Father, give me the portion of goods"—and then took his journey into a far country. As if he had said, "I am now come of age, and think myself capable of governing myself, therefore give me my share, grant me liberty, and I will trouble you no more." And thus it is with unregenerate man, Pride, elation of mind, self-confidence, become the first step in departure from God. "Pride goeth before a fall, and a high mind before destruction."

Pride intoxicates the understanding, makes man insensible to counsel and reproof, and suffers him to hear nothing but what flatters and praises him, hence he becomes rash and adventurous. And thus being inflated with an idea of himself, he becomes ungovernable, and finding himself restrained by law, the proud waves of his passions rage and swell against all that binds him, and this discontent manifests itself in finding fault with Providence, and Law, and God.

Being disatisfied with his condition he is tempted to run upon adventure, and to make

experiments in sin in order to give his imagination and passions full scope without any restraint.

If God permits, the transgressor thinks nothing so sweet and congenial as unconfined liberty, all restraint being intolerable slavery, imagining that there must needs be some admirable delight in those things which God has forbidden.

Such mutinous thoughts, such jealousies and suspicions are the immediate precursors of a proud and haughty spirit.

It is the opinion of theologians that it was this spirit of Pride that ruined Apostate Angels, and this same spirit of Pride that drove our First Parents from the garden of Eden.

The first temptation offered to Christ by Satan was a temptation to Pride. Pride was the chief ingredient in that temptation. Now since Satan used Pride as the means to ruin the first man, and employed the same in tempting the second Adam; there is every reason to suppose that he uses the same craft with all men.

2. *The Second Step* to ruin with the Prodigal was "departure from his father." "He gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country."

Home became a burden, and lost its charms, and the Prodigal desired to go into a far country, out of his father's presence, out of his control, just such a state as his pride had begotten within him.

Now this may represent the true condition of every unregenerated man. We are informed by some authorities that this "far country" is meant, "Forgetfulness of God."

Another tells us that "To depart from God is not local" (for God is everywhere present) "but to be alienated in our minds and affections from Him."

Of course the setting of this Parable leads us only to think of the younger son going to a distant city.

We see his starting with a long line of camels, or as in modern life, with much baggage, and taking train or steamer.

But after all, the far country is not necessarily distant from home. John and Judas lived for three years under the same sheltering roof of Christ's presence, and yet John was at home, while Judas, although in touch with John and Christ, was in a "far country."

And in that splendid palatial residence of

Dives, the rich man brushed past the poor beggar that lay by his steps day after day; but there was an infinite disparity between them.

Lazarus was already lying in the bosom of Abraham, although he lay on the steps; while the rich man was already in hell; a great gulf was between them although they met each day.

The elder son and the younger son of to-day may live under the father's roof, and yet be apart. It is quite probable that this Parable could be fulfilled if the younger son had never gone a step beyond the confines of his father's house.

The elder son and the younger son might have lived together for years, and yet the younger son might have been in the "far country," while the elder son would be at home.

3. *The Third Step* in the Prodigal's downward course is seen in "Misapplying, or abusing his gifts." "He wasted his substance in riotous living."

In the case of the Prodigal it was undoubtedly literal, but in a figurative sense it represents the condition of every one that departs from God, and disobeys His Will.

When once a man departs from God's pres-

ence, casts off a sense of religion, and gives liberty to his appetites and passions, Conscience becomes less powerful, and he wastes and embezzles the talents and treasures which God has given him.

4. *The Fourth Step* in the Prodigal's downward course is Slavery." "He went and joined himself to a citizen of that country."

"The young man has gone away from home, and a merry day he has of it at first. He has plenty of means, he has health on his side, many pleasant memories to sing to him, he has not yet tasted of the bitterness of life.

It would be cruel if a man who is going to serve the devil could not have just a few hours of introductory enjoyment, or something that he mistakes at least for delight.

A man cannot cut off good ties all in a moment; the ligaments require some time to get thoroughly through; and whilst the spell of old memories and traditions is upon him he imagines that he is going out into a large and wealthy place, and that every step is a step in the direction of comfort and honor.

And when the Prodigal got into the far country what did he do? "He wasted his sub-

stance in riotous living." Stepped out of liberty into license. He wasted his substance. There is nothing so easy as waste. It does not require any genius to waste property, to waste beauty, to waste life.

Any man can waste what he has. It is easy to do the destructive part of life's work; the difficulty is to gather, to accumulate, to amass, and yet to hold all that has been brought together in the right spirit, and administer it to the right ends. Why did he show such bad skill? How does it come that in a moment he was master of the art of wasting? Because he had never mastered the art of earning his own living. Everything had been provided for him. When he came down to breakfast—towards ten, the family hour being seven in the morning—he found the things still waiting for him, and at dinner he found the table lavishly spread without his having worked for a single morsel of food that was upon the board; when he felt any desire to please himself his father and his mother were but too ready to gratify his desires.

Now the young man goes out into the world to find his joy in wasting, destroying, trampling under foot all the things that he has got. But

So it is; men mistake enjoyment and the scope of pleasure; they forget that in the absence of discipline there can be no true and real enjoyment of any of the purest gifts of God. He who escapes discipline escapes one of the purest enjoyments; he who mistakes license for law goes downward to the pit at a rapid rate.

The Prodigal has a sad experience. "He began to be in want." Such men help to bring about famines, men who eat all and produce nothing, men who are consumers and non-producers. These are the men that make famines. A man who will eat up a whole wheat-field and do nothing in the way of sowing, is the man that will make a famine anywhere,—logically, necessarily.

He is eating, appropriating, consuming, absorbing,—never working, never doing anything in return. Why, here is cause and effect. The man is eating the things that are round about him, and when the last meal is gone, he says, "There is a famine in the land." Of course there is.

"And when he had spent all." He had nothing that could not be spent. All that he had was outside of him.

A man can get through the very stars of heaven if every one of them was a golden coin; a man could spend the sands of the seashore if every sparkling atom was a silver coin! He could get through it all and be a pauper at the last!

But I ask, Who is the man who cannot spend all?

The man who lives Spiritually, the man of Character, of purpose, of High Conception, of Noble Sympathy,—a man who knows truth and loves truth never spends his fortune.

Once that fortune was attempted to be described, and the words of the description I remember well. "An inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away."

These are the riches that abide and are eternal, whilst the riches outside of a man will perish and fade away.

Gold can be spent and wasted, but ideas and moral worth live on and on through the immortal years.

"And he began to be in want." Oh! It is pitiful to behold a man who has never known want when he just begins to feel it. Better be

born at the other end of things; better be born in poverty than in riches to be spent so.

What a bitter experience for the younger son when he felt the first pang of want. It was most pitiable.

Ah! When God the Father is absent from the human soul, there is an aching void the world can never fill, and when the sinful man arrives in the land of famine, and at last realizes soul hunger, and makes the effort to satisfy those immortal longings with the sensual things of life, how pitiable is his condition?

"And he went and joined himself to a citizen." He was nothing to the citizen; the citizen cared nothing for him. It seems a little way from the young man's father to the citizen, but oh, it is a long, long way!

The one was as a shining angel, and the other was a torment, or sent of providence to bring the young man to his senses.

Events are God's servants; the great purposes of Heaven are working themselves out by events which we cannot number, and which we cannot control.

5. *The Fifth Step.*—This is seen in the

Prodigal's degraded service, "Feeding swine."

Men are first enticed by pleasant and apparently innocent indulgences, whilst their goods hold out; but afterward they are reduced to beggary and servitude.

When sin has completed its work on a man, he is seldom capable of manly employment, and consequently subjected to mean and contemptible service.

But could he do nothing better than feeding swine? Ah! No. He had no skill in his fingers, he had no training for service in anything higher. All he could do was to feed swine.

In a figurative sense this shows unto us the fearful drudgery of sin, and the bitter wages which it brings to mankind.

6. *The Sixth Step* in the Prodigal's downward course is seen in the mean sustenance he receives. "Feeding on husks." "And no man gave unto him." While he was spending his money in riotous living he had plenty of friends, he had companions; there were many to share his bounty and hospitality,—where are they now? They are not within his call, they do not know him now. "No man gave unto

him now, though he had given to so many in time past."

Is this not a faithful picture of the world and sin as we find it to-day? Does not history repeat itself in conduct such as is set forth in this young man's case?

"Laugh and the world laughs with you, Weep and you weep alone." As long as there is wealth, and glitter, and privilege, the people will flock to that man who has it, but when it is gone, the world and the people of the world forsake and forget.

What a change in the Prodigal's mode of living when contrasted with his then degraded position and his utter want, with his position in his father's house!

What a change and contrast to the food and luxuries of his father's table? "Husks"—slender pods taken from the tree called "Carob," containing pulp and seeds, and sometimes eaten by the poorer people of Southern Europe, but most frequnetly given to "swine" as food.

It is quite evident from reading this narrative that Our Saviour meant the pitiable sustenance, and the vanity of the fruit of sin. St. John

sums up the fruit of sin in these words: "The things that are in the world are the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life." Signifying "bodily pleasures,—worldly profits,—and vain glory."

Well might the Prodigal be dissatisfied with his fare, and call to recollection the good and plentiful supply of food in his father's house!

And is it not surprising that so many should be satisfied with the scant, dry, and hard food which Satan provides for his followers, and wilfully reject the heavenly manna sent down from heaven? Yet so it is with multitudes of people.

"Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled." "Come, for all things are now ready." "And Jesus said, I am the bread sent down from heaven. I am the Bread of Life"—and he who eats of this bread and drinks from the fountain which He has opened, shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more.

7. *The Seventh Step.*—The climax, or depth of the Prodigal's misery. "And no man gave unto him. I perish with hunger."

It is sad to contemplate his miserable condition, Starvation.

How mournfully sad his ruined condition! He once fed on delicacies; but now he suffers for lack of the necessaries of life. He once feasted on the best food, now he is compelled to live on husks. See here an object of pity. Away from his father, in a strange country, in poverty, and suffering the bitter pangs of hunger.

Physical starvation is a fearful and dreadful condition to think of; but it is nothing to be compared to the starvation of the soul. Here in this Parable is a picture of a man who is starving, and he is the representative of all who have forsaken God, and turned aside from the King's table of good things provided in the Gospel, and whose soul is perishing for lack of heavenly manna.

All the husks of pleasure, or gain, or applause are but coarse fare for the immortal soul. Sinful men may rejoice for a season in bodily pleasure, delight in riches, and delusively mount aloft on the ladder of Fame and Glory; but as time rolls on, things lose their relish and their glitter.

The moment comes when they say, like old Barzillia, "Can I taste what I eat or drink?" or "Can I hear any more the voice of singing men and singing women?"

"When the keepers of the house tremble, and the strong men shall bow themselves!" When death approaches, the grave opens, and the last knell is in his ear, what will entertainment, feasts and rioting profit then?

He may say with Sampson, "I will arouse myself as at other times, but alas! Delilah hath shorn him of his strength, betrayed his weakness, and he is fast bound."

Men may hoard up their treasures of earth, but it is only to leave them. The fame of worldly glory is made so thin and vapory that it soon bursts and vanishes away.

Not all the plumes of fame or popular applause can lift a man up when his own weight sinks him, and his guilt casts him down. A good name, brave and virtuous deeds, noble living, will embalm a good man's memory to all ages; but the name of the wicked shall perish.

What profit will it be to be eulogized by men, and our names engraved in history, if our names are not written in the Book of Life?

CHAPTER III.

"SIN A MORAL MANIA."

"And when he came to himself, he said: How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger."—Ver. 17.

MARK the beauty of the expression, "When he came to himself." All sin is insanity; all wickedness is madness.

In the case of the Prodigal Son, the beginnings, the progress, and the fearful result of a sinful course are seen.

"He came to himself." What is implied in this phrase? Had his higher nature been entirely neutralized, so that intellect, conscience and heart had all been rendered dormant?

Had he been living only in the lower region of animal passions, appetite, and lusts? The phrase, "Came to himself," as suggested by the original Greek, signifies "a person in a swoon,

or intoxicated, or fearfully distracted, and now returning to his rational senses."

An eminent writer has said of this phrase, "that the great thought is self-inspection, self-knowledge. The man stood face to face with himself, saw himself, understood himself as he had never done before. The darkest sins of his life, the most awful secrets of his soul, stood distinctly out to the burning gaze of his conscience."

A wicked man is not himself. He has lost self-control; all his best memories have been darkened or forgotten; and he is no longer to be counted a sane man in the true and proper sense of that term.

Wickedness blinds the intellectual faculties, disorders a man's vision—spiritual, intellectual and moral; gives him exaggerated notions of all other persons and things.

A course of wickedness has a madhouse at the end of it. How much we are mistaken upon this matter of insanity! We think only those persons insane who are imprisoned in asylums, who are restrained by a straight-jacket, who have watchers and keepers appointed over them. We say about such, "Poor creatures, alas! they are

insane!" not knowing there is an insanity of wickedness, a Moral Insanity, and of all insanity moral insanity is the worst.

Responsibility begins there. If a man's reason is blighted, then responsibility goes along with it,—he cannot distinguish the right hand from the left in morals.

But where the insanity is moral, where there is a love of evil, where iniquity is rolled under the tongue as a sweet morsel, then there is obligation, there is responsibility, and where there is responsibility there is the possibility of condemnation!

"When he came to himself." He never would have come to himself but for his poverty, his desertion, his pain.

So the Heavenly Father has strange ministers in His sanctuary.

All His ministers are not mere speakers of holy and beautiful words. He hath employed some grim teachers to instruct a certain class of mankind in the first principles of right.

Grief, hunger, pain, ill-health, desertion. These are all the hired servants of the Father in bringing back His Prodigal children.

He sends them out after sons that have left

the old, dear home. This young man had to thank his swine feeding, his experience of famine, his hopelessness, as the beginning of his better life. The condition and language of the Prodigal may very truthfully set forth the condition of every awakened sinner, who by the light of the Divine Spirit sees that he has isolated the law of God; feels the smart of an awakened conscience, and beholding the sword of justice shining over his head, cries out, "Whither shall I flee from the wrath to come?"

The Scriptures in very unmistakable terms state that man is spiritually dead in sin. "And you hath He quickened who were dead in trespass and sins." "Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light."

The disease of sin doth so pollute man's nature, and destroys his powers, that there appears no hope of recovery to a state of grace and salvation, unless God is pleased to breathe the life-giving spirit.

The condition of man as a transgressor of law may be set forth as one intoxicated and stupefied by the seductive influence of evil. The understanding is beclouded, the vital powers op-

pressed, and unabled to govern himself, having rather the shape than the judgment of a man.

The enemy of man has, therefore, seized every opportunity, and every seductive art to make man insensible, and keep him so, and no ingredient is withheld, or kept in reserve,, that will have this desired effect of stupefying and rendering insensible the powers of the soul.

Sin, therefore, is considered as a Frenzy, or a Mania—a Distraction. By this is meant, that the animal spirits are so heated, or fevered, as to become unserviceable for cool and serious reasoning on Moral and Spiritual subjects.

Hence, no considerations, however serious, can find attention; neither God, nor Heaven, nor Conscience are heeded; but the inflated passions must be obeyed, notwithstanding the fatal results.

The usual symptoms of this Moral disorder may be stated as follows: "A Man sporting on dangerous ground, courting danger, delighting in mischief, refusing the good, and accepting the bad, denouncing God and Conscience; when these symptoms appear, we may rest assured that such a one is distracted with the malady of sin."

We read that "Festus was of opinion that much study or learning had made Paul mad; when he beheld his burning zeal for Christ and His Gospel, when no difficulties could abate his efforts, no allurement entice him, no violence menace him, nor no sufferings prevent him."

But Paul confessed that there was a time when he was mad, when he was hurried on by passion and prejudice against the Gospel, having acted or obeyed an erring conscience, and did it ignorantly.

But what reason, or pretense of reason, can any transgressor have in this age to oppose the law of Reason and of Religion? Can he plead ignorance? Is Morality a new opinion? Nay, he must confess moral imbecility and mania.

Notwithstanding the prevalence of this moral delirium, a great many of those afflicted with it are persons of intelligence, quick to perceive strong points in any other line of business; but as to the business of the Soul and Spiritual things, they are totally devoid of reason and understanding.

However, there are times when men can be approached, and seasonable effort can be made for their recovery.

Physicians do not usually administer remedies while the patient is in a paroxysm, because nature is then perverted, and cannot help, and it would be injudicious on the part of good and wise men to administer reproof in the heat of passion, or admonish a man intoxicated, or preach meekness to a man in a fury. But when Reason takes her throne, and the man thinks and reflects, then is the time to counsel and direct.

It was when the Prodigal Son was alone among the swine that conviction seized him, when reason returned. When he came to himself he said, "I will arise and go to my father."

The Philippian Jailer was in his own house when his heart was smitten, and then how fit and appropriate the answer, "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved."

Thus, when a transgressor is apprehensive of his folly, sees his shame, and the consequences of his sins, then is the time for such a man to repent, make his vows, form his resolutions, and implore God's mercy and forgiveness.

The Prodigal began to reflect, to think, and

to resolve. What a potential force there is in Thought! What a delightful employment is serious Reflection! "He came to himself."

What an experience! What a Revelation! What a Resolve!

CHAPTER IV.

REPENTANCE AND REFORMATION.

"And when he came to himself, he said: How many hired servants of my father's house have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger."—Ver. 17.

We see in the Prodigal Son the deplorable effects of Rashness, Folly, Pride, and Curiosity, of Insolence and Disobedience, and how these all work together until they cause his ruin. We have stated the several steps of the Prodigal's downward course, and it is now our duty to set forth the way of recovery.

First. "In Man's Return to God, we must observe *The Nature, The Motives,* and the *Process of True Repentance.*"

1. "Repentance," says Dr. A. A. Hodge, "is a change of mind or purpose, and it includes a sense of personal guilt, pollution, and helplessness,—an apprehension of the mercy of God in Christ; grief and hatred of sin, a resolute turning from it unto God, and a persistent endeavor after a new life of holy obedience."

"Repentance," Rev. Richard Watson says, "is a conviction of the fact of sin, a sharp and painful conviction of sin. It is a humble confession of sin to God. It is despairing, but hopeful."

Repentance is a miracle of divine goodness, the door of refuge for guilty man, and the inestimable privilege of all who will comply with the divine conditions.

2. "It seems strange that the Law of Moses should be silent on the doctrine of Repentance; but the reason is, because the Mosaic institution was never intended as a method of attaining eternal life, but principally a political code, stating only matters of fact, allowing no retrieval; for it utters its strong voice, 'Cursed is he that continues not in all things written in the book of the law to do them.'"

The Prophets, however, earnestly recommended Repentance, and both John the Baptist and Our Lord began their ministry with a declaration of this doctrine.

"And the times of this ignorance God winked at, but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent."

Behold the Prodigal making his retreat!

3. "The Prodigal became a Thinking and a Considerate person, and reasoned his case with himself." His former course had been furious and inconsiderate, rushing rashly on, thinking neither on things past nor things to come; now he becomes cool, reasons the case, and deliberates on what is best to be done.

And this appears to be the first step on the part of every wayward sinner in coming to God. A relenting thoughtfulness, a serious and pensive consideration. Having shut out the noise of the world, the charms of pleasure, he sits down and considers; uses his own eyes, exercises his own reason, and resolves to judge impartially.

From Deliberation he proceeds to Decision. "I will arise and go." As if he had said, "I have huried on foolishly hitherto, and now upon the brink of destruction, almost unconsciously.

"I have been dreaming of new discoveries and fresh pleasures; but I now perceive my mistake. The only way for me is to try to obtain my father's clemency, or perish.

"Whether he will receive me or not, I cannot tell; but this is the way or none; therefore

I will try." There is some hope in trying, but none in waiting in this condition; therefore, "I will arise and go." His decision was followed by actual effort. "So he came to his father."

A person may consider and not resolve, and may consider and resolve, and yet not act; but in the case of the Prodigal we have the three combined. He considered, he resolved, he came.

The Prodigal might have said: "Well, I have delayed too long already, I may consider and frame resolutions, and yet sit here and starve. There must be an effort made on my part." "So he arose and came."

Memory plays an important part with the Prodigal whilst in that lonely state in the far country, and he thought of the happy condition from which he had fallen by his departure and folly.

"How many hired servants of my father's house have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger.

"There was plenty in my father's house, and yet here I am pinched for want. I was liberally maintained, honorably treated, and wanted

for nothing, except wisdom to have acted aright; and in that condition I might have continued.

"But now I am disgraced, diseased, and disinherited; and all this the result of my own folly."

In most of these points we find a true picture of the nature and state of fallen man. When men are awakened to a sense of sin now, nearly the first thought that arises is, "Whatever my case is now, I was made in the image of God, placed under the eye of Providence, made lord of the lower, and loved in the upper world.

"I have a nature immortal, and fitted to be a denizen of a better world, but like the Prodigal I have wandered from my father and forfeited my position."

Listen to the Prodigal as he utters his sad lamentation! "I have sinned against heaven and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son. I have forfeited my heritage and sonship by sinning against my father."

The language of every awakened sinner is, "I have been ungrateful towards my best friend, broken the Law of my Creator, violated just and righteous commandments, sinned against light, knowledge and conscience, added pre-

sumption to folly, wilfulness to weakness, despised counsels, exhortations and promises, and my sins are many in number, horrible in their nature, and deadly in their tendency.

"I have disordered my own soul, spoiled my own powers, bridled reason, clouded my understanding, and here I am bound in my sin. O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death?"

With the Prodigal the Future was dark. "I perish with hunger." The prospect is gloomy, the clouds are very dark and there is only one way out. I will return to my father's house. "Return unto Me, and I will return unto you, saith the Lord."

CHAPTER V.

"THE NATURE AND NECESSITY OF RESOLUTION."

"I will arise and go to my father."—Ver. 18.

THERE is in these few words an abruptness, an earnestness of decision, and a steadfast resolution, which cannot but strike the mind on reading them.

What memories of other days would naturally rise up in the Prodigal's mind as he comes to this decision? It is quite probable that he would remember the days of old, when he was happy in that lovely retreat, that sunny spot, that dearest of all places in the world, "his father's house."

But if the thought of home would move him to form this resolution, still more would the remembrance of his father's love, the endearments of the kindest parents, the mother's arms that had sheltered him, the smiling face, the fervent blessing, the tender forbearance of his father,

whose anger was but the graver countenance of love.

These remembrances undoubtedly touched his heart, and he decided to go back to his father. "I will arise and go."

From what has been stated, it is evident that conscience may be aroused, the mind may be troubled, hope may be inspired, and signs of recovery may become apparent; but let not any man think that, having arrived at this point, that the work is done, his peace secured, and his nature changed.

For if man stays just in an awakened condition, he will fail to obtain salvation as certainly as if he had never made a reflection, or began to consider.

It is one thing to be apprehensive of danger, and another thing to escape it. The discovery of a disease is necessary in order to a cure; but the discovery is not the cure itself.

The Prodigal did not content himself with passionate expressions, or ineffective wishes, and considering his wretched condition, but Resolves upon action. "I will arise and go."

"And he came." Here we see the nature and power of the Human Will. Dr. A. A. Hodge

defines the term "Will" as the faculty of volition, whereby the soul chooses or refuses, or determines to act, and is the exercise of that faculty.

In the case of the Prodigal, it was the action of the will, putting into practice what he had previously considered, all the other powers of his being made subject to its authority, influenced by its powers, and carried with its sway.

Reason ascertains or defines what is to be done, but the Will puts the plan into operation and execution.

Christ the Nazarene said: "Ye will not come unto Me that ye might have life." The Prophet Ezekiel exclaims, "Why will ye die?" And the Apostle John says, "Whosoever will come may come."

Hence, the Prodigal was conscious of the power he possessed, and his liberty to use it, and he says, "I will arise." "I will go to my father, and I will say unto him——"

The same is true of all men. Man has the power to say, "I will endeavor to be saved, I will take shame to myself, I will earnestly implore divine help."

Here is the turning point—Resolution com-

bined with Repentance. "A true Resolution is Serious and Deliberate."

Seneca says: "That which amounts to a Resolution must be settled in the mind, founded in reason, and rooted in the judgment."

When a man has considered all the pleasures and advantages of sin on the one hand, and all the difficulties and self-denial of Religion on the other, measured the hopes and the fears, compared the present with the future, and the whole of the circumstances are present to his mind, then comes a conclusion,—this is Resolution.

The true Resolution must be Dogmatic and Absolute.

There are some persons on whom an affectionate discourse, a serious sermon, or a notable accident will move them to a state of devotion and seriousness; but the impression will soon pass away. These are commonly designated good-natured people, whose facility of temper puts them at the mercy of every contingency, and they are good or bad as the occasion serves.

St. James calls them "double-minded men," having no settled principle, nothing fixed, lacking in self-government.

Such wavering, irresolute persons can seldom

or ever arrive at any excellency of virtue. "How long halt ye between two opinions? If Baal be God serve him, but if Jehovah be God serve Him." Whether ye serve the true God or the false decide ye, for irresolution spoils all devotion, for whilst a man doubts and disputes his way, he seldoms or ever reaches any satisfactory conclusion.

Agrippa said: "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian." Here was indecision. 'Tis only the language of the coward and sluggard to say, "There is a lion in the way."

The young man who came to Christ saying: "Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?" thinking it a fine thing to be a candidate of the future world, but after getting an answer he went away very sorrowful.

On the part of the earnest seeker after God, there must be immovable, dogmatic and absolute resolution, "I will return."

Again, "A true Resolution must be a Present Resolution."

"I though on my ways, and turned my feet to Thy precepts. I made haste and delayed not to keep Thy righteous judgments."

A resolution of amendment delayed or put off

to some future time is no Repentance nor any sign of grace, as there are thousands who have reflected upon themselves, thought of God, of Religion, and of a Future State, and resolved to amend; but having put it off, lost the inclination, and have never found God or peace.

This is the most fatal cheat men play upon themselves, and it is to be feared that multitudes are entering the chambers of darkness and death, who at one time resolved to reform, to repent and believe, but all these resolutions availed them nothing. The earnest man resolves to make an immediate effort, and says: "I will trust myself no longer. By delaying my heart becomes harder, my ability less, my debt greater, and my inclination weaker. I will go no longer at uncertainties. I will now arise and return to my father."

Again, "A true Resolution must be thorough and uniform, including the whole business of life and religion."

Some persons under the convictions of Conscience resolve upon a change; but it is not to change themselves, but to change from one sin to another.

Others there are who will part with one sin

because it is disagreeable to their constitution, or too expensive for their profit, or too dangerous to their reputation; and thus they cast it aside, but with tenacity cling to other sins.

The Jews had a corrupt doctrine amongst them, namely, "That if a man observed some remarkable precept of the Law, it was enough to excuse him upon the whole, and this seems to have given rise to that question so often put to Our Saviour, "Which is the great Comandment of the Law?" For they disputed whether it was sacrifice, or circumcision, or the Sabbath; and they asked this question that they might secure their own interest without the trouble of universal obedience.

But our Saviour, being aware of the subtlety, directs them to the Law, viz.: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart, with all thy soul, with all thy mind, and with all thy strength." We therefore see that there must be a thorough and uniform resolution against all sin, and an omission of nothing that he knows to be a duty, and to do nothing that he knows to be a sin.

We might here inquire, "What are the Motives that contribute to Religious Resolutions?"

The First Motive to a resolution toward Repentance is a persuasion of mind that God is not inexorable, but that Repentance may find acceptance with Him.

For instance: "A memorable story is told concerning a people in Italy, who had so highly provoked the Romans that Camillus went with his army to take revenge upon them. But they, being apprehensive of their danger, took an effectual course to appease the Roman fury. They made no show of resistance, but set open their gates, and every man was found diligent at his ordinary work, submitting all to the will of their superior enemy. Whereupon the brave Camillus said: 'You amongst all people have only found out the way of abating the Roman fury, and your submission hath been your best defense. Upon these terms we can no more find in our hearts to injure you than upon other terms you could have found power to oppose.' The Italian magistrate replied: 'We have in good earnest repented of our former folly, that in confidence of that satisfaction to a generous enemy, we are not afraid to acknowledge our fault.'"

There is something very analogous in the case

of the relenting Prodigal, and his language is, "For what I have done amiss I can neither answer to myself, nor to my father; I can neither deny the fact, nor defend it. I will, therefore, try Repentance, and appeal from the justice to the mercy of my father."

So may it be with all repentant Prodigals now, and the language of the broken heart is, "I have offended God, and that name speaks goodness, and if He is goodness, and nothing but goodness can proceed from Him, therefore there is hope of pardon." When David was called upon to make a choice whether he would have pestilence, or famine, or sword, the King referred it back to God, and exclaimed: "Let us fall into the hands of God, for His mercies are great, but let us not fall into the hands of men." "God is good, and the goodness of God leadeth to Repentance."

The Second Motive to Religious Resolution is the possibility of being Renewed. When a man considers his sins too great, and despairs of God's mercy, his state is utterly deplorable.

The returning Prodigal might have said: "Well, I find that I have gone a great way from

my father's house, and wearied myself with my wanderings, yet it is not impossible but that I may reach home again." And so may every wanderer say: "I have strayed from God like a lost sheep. I have indulged my passions, dethroned my reason, enslaved my will, weakened my powers to do right, and hardened my Conscience by a long course of sin; yet, though I am reduced to weakness, I am still a man, though I have wandered far away, yet there is hope in God's mercy and forgiveness!" "Can these dry bones live?" They can.

The Holy Scriptures present effectual methods of reclaiming men from vice and depravity, and they give us some remarkable instances of true conversion.

In the Old Testament we have "Manasses," who was an idolater, yet upon his repentance he became a bold and virtuous man.

In the New Testament we have "Saul of Tarsus," who was a blasphemer, a persecutor of the people of God, and the "Chief of sinners," yet he became an exemplary Christian, and a zealous Apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ.

A vast multitude of the most obstinate and

rebellious of Jews, Romans, Corinthians and Ephesians, who were once great sinners, but who, also, became new creatures in Christ Jesus.

A Third inducement to Religious Resolution is an apprehension of the necessity that it must be done.

Most of the discoveries and inventions that have been made have been born of necessity. So in the case of the Prodigal, as long as he can find refuge, or a hiding place, he will avoid making a Confession; but when he finds himself reduced to extremity, and by force of conviction driven out of his hiding place, and his true condition is revealed, not until then will he earnestly apply for a remedy.

Amidst perplexity and fear he exclaims: "I cannot stand before the bar of God's justice, my appeal must be for mercy. I must resolve to change or perish. What shall I do? If I persevere in a sinful course, adding sin to sin, I shall be utterly ruined. I cannot adjourn the condemnation, for judgment slumbereth not. All other ways are beset with insuperable difficulties; there is but one way of hope, and it is to return to my father."

"And he arose and came to his father."

How beautifully do we see in this instance Resolution formed, and then carried into effect. "I will arise, and he arose and came to his father."

CHAPTER VI.

"CONFESSION AND CONTRITION."

"Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son."—Ver. 18.

Two things are made plain in Our Saviour's picture of the Prodigal. *First,* we have a contrite and mournful Confession of his offenses. Then in the *second place* we see him actually returning to his father, and to his filial duty, and with the consciousness that he could not appear before his injured father without shame and sorrow; and as he could not hope for pardon without real amendment and actual Reformation.

Hence, he joins Contrition with Reformation, in order that he may appease his father's wrath and indignation, and that he may find favor in his father's sight.

"The Prodigal's Confession." "I have sinned, I have sinned." He assumes his own guilt, and takes shame to himself.

There must be no excusings, no pleadings, no apologies, defenses, arguments, or palliations. Man must surrender; he must say: "There is no health in me; I yield; I have grieved thee, insulted thee, wounded thee. It seems as if I could never be a son again. Make something of me in thy house still. I will keep a door, I will follow the poorest of thy servants to be his servant, only have me somewhere in thy care, dear, grieved, broken-hearted Father!"

When a man begins to talk so he is saved! The young man went forward with his speech, not a single strain of selfishness in it; all a speech of condemnation and self-renunciation.

He got so far with it, then the father interrupted him, fell on his neck, and kissed him, and said: "I will make a Son of him again." It is God's way with the sinner. He never lets us finish our speech of penitence. We struggle and sob on to about a comma, or at most a semicolon, and then his great love comes down and says: "I will receive thee; begin again, begin at the Cross, my son; my child, begin at the Cross!"

It is, therefore, plain, that a right state of acceptance before God is a state of self-abhor-

rence, self-distrust, self-renunciation. So long as we stand, God will not have anything to do with us, because he cannot. But when we fall down at his feet, when we feel our nothingness and own it, it is then that He would put all heaven into our hearts.

Listen to the Prodigal's Confession: "I have sinned against heaven and before thee." These words imply that "I have sinned both against God and thee, my earthly parent."

The Jews often expressed themselves thus, calling the Divine Being by the name of heaven, as may be seen in "the baptism of John, was it from heaven, or of men?" That is, Was it of God's institution, or man's invention? In most of the Parables of Our Saviour that which is sometimes called the kingdom of God is expressed by the name "Kingdom of Heaven."

The true penitent always accuses himself. No one can think or speak worse of him than he thinks and confesses of himself. So far from extenuating his crimes, no malice can paint them worse than grief and indignation do for him.

St. Paul said of himself: "I am the chief of sinners."

A course quite contrary is taken at human tri-

bunals. Either they deny the fact, or extenuate, or justify it, either from ignorance, or from necessity, or prescribe for it the custom and example of others. But a soul thoroughly convicted of sin loathes and abhors himself, his spirit is broken, his countenance dejected, confidence enfeebled, he feels pain and remorse, he is pricked to the heart, and in his anguish cries out, "What must I do?"

The Prodigal not only accuses, but bears self-condemnation.

"I am not worthy to be called thy son." I deserve to be utterly abandoned and cast out." He not only condemns and blames himself, but even when his father had expressed compassion for him, had hastened to meet him, and kissed him, still he repeats his confession. In like manner the Apostle Paul, after he had entered the Apostleship, still refers to his former evil ways, and condemns himself for them, as if the wound bled afresh as often as it was touched.

The Prodigal exclaims: "Make me as one of thy hired servants," *i. e.*, Cast me not utterly out of thy family, but allow me to retain some relation to thee.

It is reported to have been a custom of ancient

penitents, out of their quick and cruel sense of sin, and the more effectually to recommend themselves to the mercies of God and the favor of the Church, they earnestly implored the Martyrs, in the midst of their sufferings and agonies, to remember them in their prayers, believing that such intercession of those that shed their blood must be available both with God and man.

This practice gave rise to that erroneous doctrine of "Prayers to the Saints." But the Penitent addresses himself to a higher and more prevalent Advocate, Who is highly exalted at God's right hand, Christ the Intercessor for the Transgressor.

Although it is certain that God takes no delight in the pitiful moans, in the tears and lamentations of men, neither can He be wrought upon by flattering addresses and complimentary forms, or the rhetoric of tears, nor anything of that kind, as He is superior in Wisdom and cannot be deceived by superficial craft. Yet whenever there is just cause for mercy, and when the whole heart surrenders with the confession and contrition, God has pledged Himself to hear and to deliver.

"Him that cometh unto Me, I will in no wise cast out."

That this is so is evident from the fact that the evil of sin consists in the dishonor it reflects upon the Divine perfections; such penitential sorrow as we have described does in some measure repair the breach in honoring the Divine Attributes.

Sin is an invasion of God's authority and sovereign right to rule over us, inasmuch as he who wilfully breaks any law of God proclaims himself lawless. And penitent acknowledgment, though it cannot recall the act which is past, yet it revokes and retracts the affront, and affirms God's rightful authority.

Again, Sin is an impeachment of God's Wisdom, Justice, and Goodness. He who wilfully commits sin, lays an imputation upon God, as not having seen what liberty was good for His creatures, or in not giving him a constitution of wider range to admit of that which He denies.

Whereas a man in the penitential state takes shame and guilt to himself, and justifies the Wisdom and Equity of the Creator's works.

Again, "Sin is a tacit denial of God's Omniscience."

Thus the Transgressor says: "Doth God see, and is there knowledge in the most high?" "How doth God know? Can He judge through the dark clouds?" They must either conclude with the Epicureans that it is below the majesty of God to observe the affairs of men, or that it would give Him too much trouble to watch all that men do.

This Attribute of Divine Omniscience is one of the most glorious perfections of the Divine nature, and so necessary that it is not intelligible how He could be God, or how He could govern the world, or be Judge in the great hereafter, without this Attribute.

It is, therefore, a belief in this Attribute that lies as the foundation of all the Worship and Religious Observance, seeing that a denial of it would encourage hypocrisy and sham service.

When men have this apprehension that all their actions are observed by God, it gives seriousness and solemnity to all that they do; it inspires holy confidence and encourages faith.

Thus when a man confesses his sin, and takes shame to himself, he does honor to this Divine Perfection, and he can with greater confidence implore Divine mercy.

By this genuine Contrition and Confession man puts himself under the very eye of God, and trembles at the awfulness of His gracious majesty. He also puts a mark upon all sin, and by suffering for sin, "condemns sin in the flesh."

"I bring my sins to Thee, The sins I cannot count,
That all may cleansed be—In Thy once opened Fount;
I bring them Saviour all to Thee—The burden is too great for me."

A great monarch was accustomed on certain occasions to entertain all the beggars of the city. Around him were placed his courtiers, all clothed in rich apparel. The beggars sat at the same table in their rags of poverty. Now it came to pass that on a certain day one of the courtiers had spoiled his silken apparel, so that he dare not put it on, and he felt, "I cannot go to the King's feast to-day, for my robe is foul." He sat weeping till the thought struck him, "To-morrow, when the King holds his feast, some will come as courtiers happily decked in their beautiful array, but others will come and be quite as welcome who will be dressed in rags. Well," said he, "so long as I may see the King's face, and sit at the Royal table, I will enter among the beggars."

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So, without mourning because he had lost his silken habit, he put on the rags of a beggar, and saw the King's face as well as if he had worn the scarlet and fine linen.

If we cannot come to Jesus as Saints, we can all come as sinners, only we must come with simple faith in Him and receive His favor and peace.

Confession, self-abasement, has characterized not Prophets and Apostles only, but the elect of God in every age have done so. David said, "I am as a beast before Thee." Ezra said, "I am ashamed, and blush to lift up my face to Thee, O my God."

CHAPTER VII.

"RETURNING HOME TO HIS FATHER'S HOUSE."

"But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran and fell upon his neck and kissed him."—Ver. 22.

The pathetic and passionate story of Joseph finds its parallel in this Parable. Moses gives us a very lively and pathetic story of Jacob and his sons, especially his son Joseph.

Joseph's brethren envied him because he obtained the greater share of his father's affections, and they resolved upon a plan to get rid of him; so they concluded not to stain their hands with his blood, but to sell him to some Midianites.

So, to hide their own sin, they killed a kid, dipped Joseph's coat in the blood, and went home telling a sad story to old Jacob, saying "that some wild beast had devoured his son."

When Jacob heard the sad news, he rent his clothes, put on sackcloth, and mourned many days; and even those who had done the deed pretended to be his comforters; but the wound was

too deep to be easily cured, for he refused consolation.

"No," said Jacob, "I will go down to the grave to my son mourning; my grief shall only wear away my life, and only the land of oblivion shall make me forget my son Joseph."

After a long and sad time of lamentation, there comes the startling news to Jacob "that Joseph, thy son, is yet alive, and Ruler over all the land of Egypt."

The aged man could scarcely bear the tidings, as the thought of his son's death had grieved him so long; and this report of his son living seemed to make the wounds bleed afresh.

But when Joseph sent the message, and the wagons made their appearance, then the spirit of the old father revived, and he exclaimed, "It is enough; Joseph, my son, is yet alive; I will go down and see him before I die."

This story bears the natural marks of truth, and the only mark of difference between the historic narrative of Joseph and the Prodigal Son is that the Prodigal's ruin and degradation were the result of his own folly and extravagance, whilst Joseph's humiliation and degradation were caused by others.

But in many points there is a resemblance between Joseph's slavery and imprisonment and final exaltation, and meeting with his father, and that of the Prodigal sold under sin, and becoming a slave to a citizen in another country.

We have seen in the story of the Prodigal Son a story of folly and misery, the father's grief and sorrow—but the scene changes; the Prodigal resolves to return to his father, and to make his confession and ask his forgiveness.

He begins his journey, he draws near to the family home, "but when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him."

What a beautiful scene was this! The son recovered, the father well pleased, and the stately old homestead again rang with sounds of joy and gladness. We see here also a picture of the Good Shepherd bringing his lost sheep home upon his shoulders rejoicing.

We also call to mind the meeting of Joseph and his father Jacob, when the lost son was found, and when each fell upon the other's neck and embraced each other.

Here is seen a picture of the Heavenly Father receiving and making welcome all the Prodigals

who have wandered into the paths of sin, and upon their repentance and faith in Christ they are received into the family of God, and there is joy in the presence of the Angels over one sinner repenting.

We observe here, "That God takes Cognizance of the Beginnings of Good in Men." "But while he was a great way off his father saw him, and had compassion."

Long absence might have estranged him, and age somewhat altered him; yet paternal affection is quick, and he soon recognized and distinguished him notwithstanding.

There were still left some remnants of his former self, some family likeness by which the quick, keen sight of the father recognized his long lost son.

As an earthly parent who had lost a son carries the image of his son in his thoughts, and never loses the remembrance of him when he returns home, so God Our Heavenly Father, hath a tender love for the children of men, and such a concern for their happiness, that He observes their first inclination to return to their Father.

There is a worth in man no meanness of cir-

cumstances, no degradation of character can altogether conceal. He is a jewel, though buried in a heap of corruption; the vilest outcast, possessing powers and affections that need only to be sanctified to ally him with angels.

The Heavenly Father discerns the first reasonings, the relentings, the agonies of mind, the first inclination toward returning. We do not see the grain grow, the secret springs are all out of sight; we only observe it when it is grown.

We do not understand our own bodies, nor the connection that exists between matter and mind. But God understands our frame. He discovers the first palpitations of life, and the resolutions we form. The Saviour said: " Nathaniel, I saw thee when thou wast under the fig-tree; when thou wast reasoning about Me, whether I was the Messiah or not. I knew the conflict of thy thoughts, when thou wast reasoning between the Report of the Miracles wrought by Me, and the supposed place of My Nativity; and was pleased with thy sincerity in that thou didst make diligent inquiry, and resolved upon rational grounds."

God despiseth not the day of small things.

If a man only considers, or if he prays, or

only breathes after God, the Omniscient Eye of the Father sees it.

Again, "The Sight of the Returning Son affected the father's heart. He had compassion upon him."

The father's heart yearned toward his son, and his feelings melted into kindness. And when God sees man on his way home, with confession on his lips, and sorrow in his heart, He also has compassion upon and freely pardons him.

"Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him." We are not to suppose that God is subject to the weakness of human passion in a strict and proper sense, so as to feel any pain in consequence of man's sinfulness, because the Spirituality of His Nature, the perfection of His Understanding, and His all-sufficiency will not admit it.

The Holy Scriptures represent God after the likeness of men, to the intent that we may be encouraged to hope and endeavor to strive after that which is good.

The greatness of the father's passion, the dignity of his relation, and the remembrance of his son's just offence, prompts him to meet him.

" And he ran and fell upon his neck and kissed him."

Some authors have tried to construe this passage to mean the Incarnation of our Saviour, wherein God may very properly be said to meet man, taking man's human nature, and suffering for him.

But I would rather apply it to the assistance which God gives to the beginnings of good in man.

" It is God that worketh both to will and to do of His own good pleasure." " No man cometh unto Me except the Father which is in heaven draw him." " I drew them with the cords of a man, with the hands of love."

This may be regarded as illustrating the way of God's Providence with the Jewish nation, but as that people was a type of Spiritual Israel, so it is with all men.

God not only receives men upon their return to Him, but moves toward them—draws them to Himself.

" The father shows his strong affection, he passes by all former ingratitude, and sinful provocation."

" He falls upon his neck and kissed him."

A voice from heaven proclaims, "I will cast all thy sins behind My back,—and I will blot them out of the book,—to be remembered against thee no more."

God the Father takes men as they are, and considers not the evil they have done, if repenting and believing they return to the father's house. The Prophet Ezekiel says of God, "All his sin that he hath committed shall not be once mentioned against him; but in his righteousness that he hath done he shall live." But if the wicked turn from all his sins that he hath committed, and keep all My statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not die."

The Scriptures assure us of the greatness of God's pardoning-mercy in three very important particulars.

First.—"That God pardons great and numerous sins."

Second.—"God forgives repeated acts of transgression, when the penitent returns in the spirit of genuine Repentance."

The Great Teacher laid it down as a duty to be observed by all Christians,—that as often

as our brother offends against us and repents, He says, thou shall forgive him."

Third.—" The Heavenly Father gives full and absolute pardon for all sin without any reservation."

He retains no old grudge, conceals no spite, never upbraids men with their former transgressions; but casts all his sins behind His back, buries them in oblivion, and " abundantly pardons."

It is not usually so with men, they say, " I will forgive, but I will not forget."

It is recorded that " David swore to Shimei that he should not die; yet he gives his charge to his son Solomon, that he should not suffer his hoary head to come to the grave without blood." But it is not thus with the Heavenly Father.

His acts of Grace are without reservation. He never retracts or revokes them, never finds out evasions afterward; if He pardons, He never departs from it, unless the transgressor departs from his repentance, and so excludes himself.

Men sometimes resemble burning mountains, whilst they are kept close they burn slowly, but

lastingly. Suppressing their passions, only to perpetuate them.

But God holds no such reservation against the sinner. He is a God of Peace and Truth, His mercies are as the great mountains, and whom He pardons He loves, and those whom He loves He trusts and admits them to honor and Sonship.

By this means He demonstrates "The Greatness of His Mind, and the Largeness of His heart. He makes manifest the Infallibility of His Wisdom. And that He estimates true goodness, and nothing else is acceptable unto Him."

Sin, the greatest of all evils, can be Forgiven. saith the judgment of a noble Christian, "Sin is the greatest evil in all the world, 'tis the only thing that God abhors, and that brought Jesus Christ to the Cross, that ruins and blights souls, that shuts heaven, and that has laid the foundations of perdition. Or, it is the pricking thorn in the eye, the deadly arrow in the side, the two-edged sword that hath wounded my conscience, and slain my comforts, and separated between God and my soul."

"It is that which hath hindered my prayers, and embittered my mercies, and put a sting in

all my crosses, and, therefore, I can't but disapprove of it, and disallow it, and condemn it to my death." Thus spoke Chrysostom the noble Christian.

How comforting is the doctrine of Forgiveness through the mercy of God. The forgiveness that is with God is such as becomes Him, such as is suitable to His greatness, goodness, and other excellences of His nature, and by which He is known to be God. " And He saw him, had compassion upon him, and kissed him "—pardoned him, and forgave him all of his transgressions.

If there be any pardon with God, it is such as becomes Him to give; when He pardons He will abundantly pardon, that is, " He multiplies pardon unto pardon."

In the midst of the darkness and the gloom of the Cross, there came a voice from one of those thieves. It flashed into the soul of Jesus as He hung there. " This must be more than man; this must be the true Messiah." He cried out, " Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom! "

We are anxious to get the last word or act of our dying friends. Here was the last act of

Jesus. He snatched the thief from the jaws of death, saying, "This day shalt thou be with me in Paradise." Such was His forgiveness of sin, an act of grace, and then turning His face He prayed for His enemies, and He said: "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do." Mercy, like the regions of space, has no limits; and as these stretch away before the traveller who looks out from the farthest star, so the loftiest intellect and the largest heart can descry no bounds to mercy.

CHAPTER VIII.

"THE BEST ROBE—WHAT IT IS, AND WHO MAY WEAR IT."

"Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him."—Ver. 22.

THERE is a never failing spring of kindness and good will in the heart of the parent toward his child, which flows with such life and vigor that is is difficult to stop it; for if it is obstructed in one way it breaks out and shows itself in another. If the child proves good and virtuous, the parental affection is as a stream, the parent feels an unspeakable delight and satisfaction, and virtuous children become a crown of joy and of triumph.

And if the child departs, and is given to sin, even then the parent is ready to put the best construction on the sinful act, and interpret all for the best. And if they become very degenerate and undutiful, though it check the tide of

affection; yet it cannot divert the current, for at the worst they cannot cease to pity them.

There is in like manner an everlasting affection in the heart of God toward His creature man, insomuch that when they have sinned, God pities them; when they begin to do good He loves them and blesses them; but when they become virtuous and holy, He takes complacency in them.

These features or degrees of divine favor we have represented to us in the parable of "The Prodigal Son."

Behold, the singular favor which the father confers upon his son, when he repented, returned, and became reconciled to him.

First.—The father saw his son's pitiable condition, bearing the marks of sin on his person, covered with rags; and he calls upon his servants to "bring forth the best robe, and put it on him." Not simply to cover him; but that he might appear in garments suitable to the son of such a father.

Second.—The son in contemplation of his distress had no higher ambition than to be admitted into the condition of a servant; but the father adorns him with the insignia of a person

of quality, and therefore puts on him "the best robe," and "puts a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet," all of which shows us that the father regarded him as belonging to a noble family, to be treated as a person of quality, and to receive royal favor.

Third.—The son in the time of his rebellion had become a slave, and it was the custom of slaves to go without shoes on their feet, and only free-men wore shoes.

The father, in token of his son's emancipation, said to his servants, "put shoes on his feet."

These things show that the father, having forgiven his son upon his submission and return, now places him in the family circle, with all the rights and privileges of a son.

According to the analogy of the Parable we may infer that Our Heavenly Father, upon the sincere repentance of men, becomes reconciled to them, and bestows upon them the spirit of adoption, whereby they cry "Abba Father."

Let us ask—"What is meant by the Best robe?"

First.—By the Best Robe is to be understood that excellent adornment of more complete

Holiness and Sanctification, which God works in and bestows upon a Sinner upon his reconciliation to the Heavenly Father. The Best Robe, that robe which Adam lost when he sinned, and in consequence of which we read that "he covered himself with fig-leaves." That Robe which in another Parable is designated "The Wedding Garment." The garment of a heavenly contexture, the White Robe with which they are clothed when baptized with the Holy Ghost and with fire. The Greeks called it "The Ancient Robe," which man wore before he fell, and that which was worn by the Lord Jesus Christ."

Second.—The Holy Scriptures sometimes speak of the inward qualities of the mind and the outward actions of the life by the garments of the body.

For instance.—"To her (the Church) was given to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white, for the white linen is the righteousness of the Saints." By the Woman is meant the Church of Christ, called the Lamb's Wife, whose ornaments are Righteousness and Holiness, and metaphorically represented by white garments.

If we consider all the uses of garments, there

is nothing more exactly corresponds with nor figuratively expresses holy and virtuous qualifications. For if garments are used for distinction, what makes a greater and truer distinction between man and man than their lives and tempers?

It is not being high or low, rich or poor, noble or ignoble, learned or ignorant, which makes so great a difference between men, as when one is good and virtuous, and the other vicious and profane. If garments are for Ornament, what is there that represents a man more beautiful and lovely than the Ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, a just temper, and a holy life?

And what is there that disguises and deforms a man like vice and debauchery? If Garments are for defence and security, what is there that gives a mind that security and confidence like innocency of life and sweet, gentle piety?

And on the other hand, what exposes a man who is open to all the calamities of this life, and the frown of God in the world to come, like a sinful and depraved heart, and a vicious and corrupt temper?

We have, therefore, plain reason and good au-

thority to make this application of the first favor which the reconciled father gives to his returning son; and in applying it to that sanctified state of every returning sinner to the heavenly Father.

We now ask, "Does Sanctification precede, or follow Justification? Or are they Concomitants?"

"In the order of things Regeneration precedes Justification, although as to time they are contemporaneous. Upon the exercise of Faith by man, Justification is the instant act of God on the ground of that perfect righteousness of Christ apprehended by faith; and the subject is entitled to all the relations and rights secured by the covenant which Christ has fulfilled in his behalf."

"Sanctification is the progressive growth toward the perfected maturity of that new life which was implanted in Regeneration." Sanctification is sometimes spoken of as the work of man himself, *i. e.*, "And let the priests also, which come near to the Lord, sanctify themselves, lest the Lord break forth upon you." And again, "For I am the Lord your God: Ye shall therefore sanctify yourselves."

Thus, when a person solemnly and unreservedly gives himself to God, he may then be said to sanctify himself.

An unregenerated man, therefore, in coming to God for Pardon, must have a hearty sorrow for sin, actual reformation, and thus sanctify himself; and when true conversion takes place and the New Birth has been effected, then from that period maturity and perfection begin.

This is how we are to understand Sanctification as going before Justification; but the full accomplishment of the sanctified state is to be gradually attained afterwards.

The New Birth is sometimes in Scripture represented by the Natural; and the analogy in many respects holds good.

As in Nature there is not a perfect man found at first, fully matured, with all his members in manly proportions; but only a babe, with all the faculities of a man, but they need maturing and developing. So is it in the New Birth. There is a vital principle, a divine essence; but being a living principle in process of time displays all the functions of holy sanctified manhood. It is evident, therefore, that God for His own glory, designs to bring men to higher degrees of Sancti-

fication, to a robust, noble manhood, therefore He puts upon him "the Best Robe."

The Young Convert may have all faculties and powers of a perfect man in Christ Jesus, yet he is but a beginner, and like a young child he is weak and feeble in his spiritual powers.

He is not only apt to be deceived and abused by sophistry, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, less able to bear the burdens, and resist the temptations of a Christian course.

The traces of his former course are not yet worn out, he is not yet at the top, but he is going up to the nobler standard of a perfect man in Christ Jesus.

Such a man having "put on the whole armor of God, is strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might, and defies all the powers of darkness." Satan may tempt him, the world present its allurements; but he stands immovable as a rock, stable as an angel, and all the "gates of hell cannot prevail against him."

Now, because this admirable condition is both desirable and possible, and that which God designs to bring every man to, therefore He proceeds to superadd to the convert further means of grace and sanctification.

Holiness is beauty. There is no beauty like that of a pure character. The grandest sight on this earth is not the march of the all-conquering storm whose cloudy battalions go rushing through the sounding heavens; the most beautiful thing on earth is not the garden which opens and sends forth from its censers fragrance; it is not the stateliness of the tree which you sit under through the long summer's day; those are not the most beautiful things on earth that art carved out of stone; the beauty of the soul lies in its secret chambers; and the rich, deep, just, holy and loving natures—these are the beautiful things of this world. There is nothing so beautiful as Christ in man. Holiness is genius. Holiness hath keen, piercing eyes that sees every filament of divine truth and holy communication to men. When the Ministry is holy, when the Church is holy, when every man, high priest and doorkeeper, puts on the Best Robe, and is holy, then the world will begin to feel that there is something in it that is not of its own nature.

Pardon is not enough. Pardon seems merely to restore man to a kind of negative condition. Pardon may mean in some cases, where not

fully understood and realized, mere innocence.

There was a stain upon the heart. That stain has been removed by some powerful detergent, and now the heart is pretty much as it was in years gone by. That may be some people's notion of pardon. But when God pardons there is another step involved, and another element enters into consideration.

Man becomes not only pardoned, he becomes holy. Holiness denotes vitality of sympathy as between the soul and God. Holiness is the comprehensive word which includes the whole discipline of life, the whole trust of the heart in God, and the continuous aspiration of the spirit after the perfectness of God's own beauty.

"Bring forth the Best Robe, and put it on him," the Robe of complete holiness, and entire sanctification.

CHAPTER IX.

"THE GIFT OF HOLY SPIRIT, SYMBOLIZED BY THE RING."

"And put a ring on his hand."—Ver. 22.

It is very desirable that we distinguish between the visits or solicitations of the Holy Spirit, and the gift or residence of it. The Holy Spirit resides with, and dwells with good men.

The second favor which the father bestows upon his returning son after his reconciliation, is that, "He puts a ring upon his hand." This habit or custom, by the common consent of the world, indicates either freedom and ingenuity, or riches and affluence, or singular favor and respect, or quality and nobility. St. James in his Epistle gives us the key to this usage when he says: "If there come into your assemblies a man having a gold ring, and goodly apparel, and there come in also a poor man in

vile raiment, and ye have respect to him in gay clothing."

At a famous battle, where the Romans suffered a total defeat by the Carthaginians, the greatness of the victory was estimated by this—that more than a bushel of rings were taken by the conqueror from the hands of the slain, thus showing that many persons of quality fell in the battle.

Thus the father in putting a ring on his son's hand signifies that he reinstated him in the quality and honor of a son.

Some writers state that the principle use for the ring was for sealing documents, as the ring usually bore the image, or impress, of him that wore it; and consequently they apply this passage in the mystical sense to the gift of the Holy Spirit. One popular authority (John Chrystostom) writes thus:

"Give my son a ring also, that he may have the earnest of the Holy Spirit, and carrying that about him may be kept in safeguard by it; that bearing my signet he may both become formidable to all his enemies, and publicly appear the son of such a father." This interpretation seems natural, because this is the usual method

of God's favor, that after He hath justified, then He further Sanctifies; and for the completion of that gives His Holy Spirit.

Another writer says—"That man is the wager which God and Satan contend about: But when a man has given himself up to every kind of sin, then the title is decided, and such a person is Satan's property. But when man practices virtue, God recovers His right, and takes possession of him by His Holy Spirit. Hence, St. Paul to the Ephesians writes, 'After ye believed, ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise.'

"And when writing to the Corinthians he writes, 'Who hath also sealed us, and given us the earnest of the Spirit.' And again: 'Grieve not the Holy Spirit, whereby ye are sealed uto the day of redemption.'"

But in order that we may have a clear understanding of this subject, we may observe, that God does employ His Holy Spirit previous to conversion; and in order to produce it.

It is said in Genesis, 6th chapter, 3d verse: "My Spirit shall not always strive with man." And of the ancient Jews it is said that "they vexed His Holy Spirit."

And we may say in general that the Holy Spirit moves upon all men, awakening Conscience, suggesting good thoughts, and checking the sinful course, insomuch that whatsoever degree or beginnings of good there is in any man, the Spirit is the first speaker. For as no good can come but from God, so it is reasonable to think that there is any man so despised by God but that some overtures of good have been made upon him; nor does the good Spirit leave any man till such person has wilfully and obstinately resisted, quenched, grieved, and driven Him away.

I only now speak of the operations of the Spirit which God vouchsafes to men, whilst they are yet in an unregenerated state. What I wish to set forth here is the peculiar privilege of all good men,—such as have cherished the Spirit's presence, entertained the visits, and complied with the intimations of the Holy Spirit, and to such persons the Spirit not only visits them, but resides and dwells with them, and becomes as it were a constant principle in them, and they "become the temples of the Holy Spirit."

The Great Nazarene taught His Disciples saying, "If any man love Me he will keep My

words, and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him, and will make Our abode with him."

The Great Teacher said again, "And if any man will open to Me, then I will come in to him and sup with him and he with Me."

St. Paul said: "Know ye not that ye are the temples of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you."

"The Benefits derived from the Holy Spirit's Presence."

This indwelling of the Spirit is called a Seal, and men are said to be sealed by the Holy Spirit, because the seals were used to denote property; so God hereby marks out such men for His own —*i.e.*, those who have an interest in Him, and He in them, and herein is the great advantage and privilege in having the Spirit's presence.

First.—The Spirit thus dwelling in men gives them a Title, not only to God's care and providence; but to an Inheritance among the sons of God, and to a participation of that unspeakable felicity in the realms of bliss forever.

St. Paul in the Epistle to the Ephesians says: "After ye believed ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of Promise, which is the earnest of our

inheritance until the time of the purchased possession." We are hereby assured of the heavenly inheritance, though we are not yet in possession of it; and this is the pledge of our adoption, upon which the inheritance is promised.

St. Paul again speaks in the Epistle to Romans: "But if the Spirit of Him that raised Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised Jesus from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you."

When God took possession of the Tabernacle amongst the Jews, built by Moses, and afterwards the temple built by Solomon, and solemnly dedicated to God, it pleased the Father to give a Cloud in which was seen the Divine Majesty hovering over it, and the house was called by the Jews "The Shekinah," or "The Dwelling-presence" of Jehovah, and God was said to "dwell between the Cherubims"—because there this symbol of the Divine Presence was manifested.

God is, therefore, present by His Spirit with all good and holy men at all times, and in all places, by which they become "Temples of the Holy Ghost." Paul thus concludes, "If any

man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His."

Second.—The Holy Spirit not only takes up His residence in the hearts of good men, but He actuates and prompts them in their actions, and strengthens them in their duties, and they are said to be "led by the Spirit, to live and walk in the Spirit."

The Spirit never destroys the willing power in man, never interferes with the individual responsibility; but stimulates and strengthens man in his efforts to do that which is right.

Third.—Again. The Holy Spirit fills the hearts of good men with inexpressible joy, giving them the foretastes of the blessedness to be revealed hereafter, by means of which the believer rejoiceth with a joy unspeakable and full of glory.

The anticipation of such blessedness kindles within the true believer a holy ecstasy, so that he "rejoices in tribulation, and longs for the brighter glory, and waits with patience for the coming of the King."

St. Paul says: "It doth not yet appear what we shall be!" It seems, however, that the hallowed foretaste, and the glowing anticipation

of this coming glory, is quickened and intensified by the Spirit's presence within. "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit's that we are the Children." "And it doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is."

We anxiously put the question: "What is the Doctrine of the Holy Spirit?" In reply, we would say that it is the doctrine of the interworking of the Spirit of God upon the souls of men. I have no philosophy about it. All I can say is this:—That God knows what is the secret way in which mind reaches mind. I do not—you do not. I know not why words on my tongue wake up thoughts corresponding to those in you.

I do not know why the soul of man, like a complex instrument of wondrous scope, is played upon by words, so that there are waked up in it notes along the whole scale of being.

I do not understand why these things are so, but unquestionably they are so. I do not know how a mother pours her affection on the heart of her child; but she does so.

Two stars never shine into each other as two

loving souls shine into each other. I know it is so, but I do not know why it is so. I do not know how soul touches soul, how thought touches thought, or how feeling touches feeling; but I know it is so. Now that which we see in the lower departments of life—that which exists between you and your friends, and me and my friends—that I take, and by my imagination I lift it up in to the divine nature, and give it depth and scope and universality; and then I have some conception of the doctrine of God's Spirit poured upon the human soul.

"And he put a ring on his hand, bearing the impress of Himself, the seal of his favor and approbation; so the Spirit of God is given to all believers, they bear His image, receive His likeness. and are sealed unto the day of Redemption."

"A measure of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal," but more especially is this true with believers, for the Spirit is given in larger measure, the Spirit of Wisdom, the Spirit of Life, and the Spirit of Love.

As the Spirit of Holiness, He imparts a pure taste; as the Spirit of Glory, He throws a radiance over the character; as the Spirit of Life,

He revives religion; as the Spirit of Truth, He gives transparency to the conduct; as the Spirit of Prayer, He melts the soul into devotion; and as the Spirit of Grace, He imbues with benevolence.

CHAPTER X.

"HONORABLE SERVICE."

"Put shoes on his feet."—Ver. 22.

WE now come to consider *the third ornament* with which the father invests his returning son. "Put shoes on his feet."

We inquire, "What is the mystical sense of this passage?" What favor on God's part toward the penitent returning to his heavenly father? One authority says that: "God puts shoes on the convert's feet, that the old serpent may not find him naked or bruise his heel; but that he may be able to tread upon the serpent's head, and also that he may run in the ways of God's commandments."

Another writer says "that the passage signifies the honor that is put upon eminent Christians, namely, to be employed by God as workers in His vineyard, and in leading others from

their evil ways." In the celebration of the "Passover," we find that it was to be eaten with staves in their hands, and shoes on their feet, as well as with bitter herbs; as if to teach us, that when a man is delivered from the power of sin by the mighty power of God, he should not only solemnize the memorial of God's mercy with sorrowful and bitter reflection, but should stand ready to run on God's errands of mercy to all men.

St. Paul in his Epistle to the Ephesians said: "Having your feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of Peace," which seems to allude to the passage in Isaiah: "How beautiful are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace!" which enjoins a readiness to promote and set forth the Christian Religion, and in this sense I take it here.

First.—We learn, "That when God receives a penitent sinner, sanctifies and adopts him, He then fits him for His service, employs him in it, and expects him to seek and serve others."

Whilst it is evident that God stands in need of no man in order that His designs shall be executed, yet it is as certain that in all the instances of His Providence, He loves to employ

His Children in carrying out those designs, and to receive the distinguished honor and reward for so doing.

Man was originally designed and admirably fitted for the Maker's service; but man forfeited his allegiance, and served against his Maker. It is, therefore, as instance of the most wonderful grace and goodness that God should trust him again.

It is a great act to forgive, but to trust man, —rebellious man, is indeed beyond our comprehension, and yet God does both, and even more, for He pardons ungrateful rebels, then fits them for His service, and then trusts them.

When a man of God came to old Eli the Priest to threaten him and his sons with the effects of God's displeasure for their profaness, he expressed it in these words: "Them that honor Me I will honor, and they that despise Me shall be lightly esteemed." The import of which is, that it was the highest honor and dignity to be admitted to, and to continue in the service of God, and likewise the greatest debasement to be thrust from it. The Prodigal Son acknowledged his unworthiness to be called a son, but desired to be admitted to the lowest rank of a

servant, and so far from expecting any honor, he deemed himself incapable of any trust.

But the father honors him with the highest relation of a son, and the Divine Father honors all who come to Him with the most weighty and important trust, putting shoes on his feet, and equipping him for useful employment.

St. Paul had a strong sense of this when he said: "I thank Christ Jesus Our Lord who hath enabled me, for that He counted me faithful, putting me into the Ministry, who was before a blasphemer." We are not to be understood by this, that all who are converted were to be employed as God's Ministers in the public dispensation of the Gospel; for all have not the ability nor the training requisite to discharge the functions of the ministry, therefore is is made a special Office by God, and none can undertake it but by the voice of the Church.

All those whom God hath been pleased to pardon have a work to do, and should, therefore, use their utmost endeavor to be the servants of spiritual good to others.

Second.—The Manifold ways of doing good without assuming the Office of the Ministry.

Solomon tells us that, "A wicked man speak-

eth with his feet, and teacheth with his fingers." That is, though he say nothing with his lips, his life and his actions teach and instruct the world in wickedness: Good men may most effectually teach righteousness to others by their example.

Example insinuates gently, works insensibly, but powerfully. Example relieves men's modesty, and yet shames their sloth. Example kindles emulation, and recommends the excellent. Example convinces, and makes plain the possibility of virtue. Besides, there are a great many impressions that words cannot express; but are to be observed in the life and conversation of good people. Besides example, there are many opportunities and advantages which good men have of propagating Religion,—such as the advice of parents, the influence of benefactors, the society of commerce and conversation.

Every one of which a mind inflamed with the love of God and compassion for souls will find useful to this grand purpose.

Moses instructed Israel concerning the keeping of a sense of God and His Laws in their minds, with the command to hand it down to their posterity. " These words which I command thee this day shall be in thine heart, and

thou shalt teach them diligently to thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up."

St. James says "by converting a sinner from the error of his ways, we save a soul from death, and cover a multitude of sins." Daniel exclaims: "They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever."

Behold! The beautiful character of an accomplished Christian as he stand equipped and arrayed with the Best Robe, the Ring, and the Shoes. We have hitherto considered these Three Ornaments separately, but now we shall look at them in their entirety.

We also discover the distinguished favor which God confers upon His reconciled Child, in Sanctifying, Qualifying, and Sealing those whom He saves.

It was a beautiful and noble character which the historian gave of "Marcus Cato." He said: "That Cato was virtue drawn to the life, and the resemblance was so exact, that it was hard to say whether virtue animated Cato. Cato

gave subsistence and visibility to virtue; nay, such was the unshaken greatness of his mind and the purity of his life that he seemed more to participate of the divine perfection than of human frailty; for he was both so far above all temptations of doing evil, also free from the alloy of mean ends and designs in doing good, that it seemed a kind of necessity of nature in him to do well."

This description may seem somewhat romantic, but it serves to show that a genuine Christian must surpass Cato, as Cato surpassed other men, or as much as the advantages of Christianity surpassed Philosophy. For a Christian is not only improved by human discourse, but raised by divine revelation, and governed by divine wisdom.

He is not under the faint and fluctuating hopes which reason can suggest; but under the assurance of faith; and being inflamed by the love of God and the prospect of reward, that he breathes nothing but greatness and glory. Wherever he goes, God is in his heart, heaven is in his eye, joy is in his countenance; and he sends forth the fragrance of piety, and exhibits the lustre of Religion.

1. *First.*—"The Christian is Sanctified, the image of God is restored, and Christ Jesus is formed within him."

All the maims of his fall are cured, the confusion of his powers rectified, the tyranny of custom vanquished, his conscience is enlightened, his reason raised, his passions subdued, his will set right, all his powers are obedient, and it is "his meat and drink to do the will of His Heavenly Father."

Second.—"The Christian is confirmed by the Grace of God, upheld by the Divine power; he is the peculiar care of Providence, the special charge of Angels, and the Temple of the Holy Ghost."

All God's dispensations provide for his safety, add to his strength, and work for his good. Satan is restrained so that he shall not "tempt him above what he shall be able to bear," and all attempts of the evil one are foiled as long as the Christian holds his confidence, and walks in the right.

Persecutions may assail him, and flatteries may undermine him, prosperity may fan him, or adversity tend to crush him; raillery may go about to shame him, or buffoonery may try to

laugh him out of it; but his race is certain, and his foundation is as sure as the "Rock of Ages" for "he knows whom he hath believed."

3. *Third.*—"The Christian being an Adopted Son of God, Sealed by the Holy Spirit, he realizes the quickening presence of the Spirit, is warmed by His motions, and assured by His testimony."

Every day he finds himself "a day's march nearer home," therefore he sts his face thitherward, he puts on the habit, the joy, the language, and the very heart of heaven.

He goes up by contemplation and views the goodly land, he rejoices at the sight, is filled with admiration, and exclaims: "to die is gain." He has need of nothing, fears nothing, despises the world, life is tedious, death is welcome, and to be dissolved and depart and be with Christ is far better.

What can trouble him now when he has peace of Conscience? What can disturb him now when heaven is before him? What can dismay him now whose Immortality is secure? What can affright him now whom death cannot hurt? And what can deject him when he is sure of a crown of life?

4. *Fourth.*—"Is it any wonder after such an Equipment, if such a man be active and vigorous for God, and energetic in the service of his Heavenly Father?"

With such an equipment—clothed with the Robe of Righteousness, Sealed by the Holy Spirit, and Shod with the Gospel of Peace, the Christian goes into the world to do his Master's bidding, to scatter light, and liberty, and love.

Here we see Religion in a man at its highest degree and most perfect maturity attainable in this life; the next step is heaven, one degree more and Glory commences. "Thus shall it be done unto the man whom God delights to honor."

The man thus Clothed, and Sealed, and Shod may be able to say with St. Paul, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith, henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness which the Lord the righteous Judge shall give me at that day, and not to me only, but to all them that love His appearing."

CHAPTER XI.

"THE ELDER BROTHER, AND WHOM HE REPRESENTS."

"Now his Elder son was in the field; and as he came and drew nigh to the house, he heard music and dancing. And he called one of the servants, and asked what these things meant. And he said unto him.—Thy Brother is come; and Thy Father hath killed for him the fatted calf, because he hath received him safe and sound."—Luke XV., 25-26.

THE story of the elder brother has been a subject of speculation in every age, and many are the opinions which have been expressed concerning him. Who he is, and whom does he represent?

The elder son seems to represent the Pharisees and scribes, mentioned in the second verse of this chapter, and was a rebuke to their exclusiveness and to their pride.

The elder son, like the Pharisees and Scribes, was a Legalist. He wanted the father to be not a father, but solely a judge, demanding satisfaction and penalty as the one basis on which

the father may receive the Prodigal—the transgressor.

The father is a just judge, but his fatherhood is larger than his judgment. It has been said that the father of the Prodigal forgave without effort, without sacrifice. Nay, verily, that son's forgiveness was bought with a great price, with the father's heartblood, in that the father had refused to give himself up simply to indignation and hatred, and had paid tribute to love every day.

Against every cry from the Prodigal's sin, "Shall you endure this also?" The righteousness of the father had answered, "Yea, I will endure it, I will bear the shame, the sorrow, the agony, I will pay the price of love, and so will seek for my lost one till he be constrained to answer my cross-bearing with repentance."

"And calling one of the servants, he asked what these things meant. And he told him, 'Thy brother is come, and thy father hath killed the fatted calf,' etc. And the elder son said to his father, 'Thou never gavest me a kid that I might make merry with my friends; but as soon as this thy son has come, thou hast killed for him the fatted calf.'"

This senior son stands at the corner of the house, a frigid phlegmatic. He has just come in from the fields in very substantial apparel. Seeing some wild exhiliration around the old mansion, he asks of the old servant, "what these thing meant?"

One would have thought that, on hearing that his younger brother had come back, he would have gone into the house and rejoiced. But no. There he stands. His brow lowers. His lips curl with contempt. He stamps the ground with indignation. He sees nothing at all to attract. The feast does not sharpen his appetite. The lively music does not put any spring into his step. He criticises the expense, the injustice, and the morals of the entertainment. The father rushes out, and coaxes him to come in.

He will not go in, but instead of that he scolds the old father. He says: "Father, you put a premium on prodigality. I stayed at home and worked on the farm. You never made a party for me. You didn't so much as kill a kid; but this Prodigal, who went away with fine clothes and comes back in rags, and what a time you have made over him! He

breaks your heart, and you pay him for it. That Prodigal deserves to be lashed with the rod instead of having a banquet." "Who is that elder son?" Dr. Krummacher answers: "I know him; I saw him yesterday." And when his friends insisted upon whom he meant, he said, "Myself; when I saw the account of the conversion of a most obnoxious man, I was irritated."

"This senior brother spoken of in this Parable stands for the self-congratulatory, self-satisfied, self-worshipped man, wherever he is found." With the same breath in which he vituperates against his younger brother, he uttered a panegyric for himself.

The senior brother was disobedient, for when his father told him to come into the house he stayed outside. The elder brother was untruthful, for he said that the Prodigal son had devoured his father's living, when the father, so far from being a pauper, was a prince.

This senior brother, with so many faults of his own, was merciless in his criticism of the younger brother. Oh, how much easier it is to blame others than to blame ourselves!

Adam blamed Eve, Eve blamed the serpent,

the serpent blamed the devil, the senior brother blamed the Younger brother, and none of them blamed themselves.

"The senior brother of the Parable stands for all those who are faithless about the Reformation of the dissipated and the dissolute."

In the very tones of his voice you can hear the fact that he has no faith that the reformation of the younger son is genuine. His entire manner seems to say, "That boy has come back for more money. He got a third of the property; now he has come back for another third. He will never be contented to stay on the farm. He will fall away. I would go in, too, and rejoice with the others if I thought this thing was genuine; but it is a sham."

Alas! For the incredulity of many people who profess to be Christians, in regard to the reclamation of the recreant.

There is not a mansion in the heavenly world that has not in it a Reformed Prodigal, who returned to the Father and stayed with Him.

Who was John Bunyan? A returned Prodigal. Who was Richard Baxter? A returned Prodigal. Who was George Whitfield, the eloquent? A returned Prodigal. And there are

tens of thousands of them, who have reformed, and who have been translated into heaven.

"The senior brother of the Parable stands for the Spirit of Envy and Jealousy." The senior brother thought that all the honor they did to the returning Prodigal was a wrong to him.

He said: "I have stayed at home, and I ought to have had the ring, and I ought to have had the banquet, and I ought to have had the garlands." Alas! for the spirit of jealousy coming down through the ages! Cain and Abel, Esau and Jacob, Saul and David, Haman and Mordecai, Othello and Iago, Orlando and Angelica.

Oh, this accursed spirit of envy and jealousy! Let us stamp it out from all of our hearts. Let us rejoice at the success of others. The next best thing to owning a garden ourselves is to look over the fence and admire the flowers of some one else's garden.

The next best thing to having a banquet ourselves is having a banquet for the Prodigal brother that has come home to his father's house.

Again, this senior brother of the Parable

stands for the mournful, sad, pouting Christian. While there was much joy and congratulations within doors, the sad picture of the pouting brother stands outside, looking as he felt, miserable.

Ah! I am glad that the face of this pouting elder son is put before us in order that we may better see the radiant and forgiving face of the father.

Contrasts are mighty. The artist in sketching the field of Waterloo, years after the battle, put a dove in the mouth of the cannon. "Raphael," in one of his cartoons, beside the face of a wretch put the face of a happy and innocent child.

And the sad face of this irascible and disgusted elder brother is brought out in order that in the contrast we may better understand the forgiving and radiant face of God.

"My son," "thy brother"; "let us eat, and be merry." "My," "thy," "us." The Prodigal has his own pronoun; he says: "I will arise, and go to my father," not my brother's father, but my own. Repeat these pronouns—"my," "thy," "us."

We cannot keep great joys in the singular

number. You must at one point or another pluralize.

"My son." The father recognized facts. He said: "My son was dead!" He was not in a swoon, he was not a diamond off color, a little yellow, but still a diamond. The father looked facts in the face.

Until we do that we can make no sound progress. We shall never evangelize the world if we think the world is only in a swoon.

"The Son of Man is come to seek and save that which was lost." He has not come down to prop up a reeling polity; He is going to reconstruct shattered ruin. "Dead"—how dead?

There is a death that has poetry in it; which means that the family have taken a bulb and planted it, sure that it will flower in heaven. That is not death; but the dear one is thus merely planted or sown. The son was not dead in this sense, or the father would never have wished him back again; he would have made no feast for him if he had returned.

Given the conviction, not the mere sentiment, that our departed ones are in heaven, and when we are asked to give judgment in the court of the highest reason and reverence, we should

say, "Do not disturb them, let them alone in their high ecstasy; it is too cold down here for such as they are now." "For this my son was dead." What does this mean? Dead! The body alive but the soul dead; Understanding, Conscience, Imagination, Heart, all the highest powers and qualities of the soul dead.

That is death. Death is not the worst evil that can befall any man, or any family, or any nation. There are living men who are too dead to be buried. Such were some of us: "We were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.

"The soul that sinneth it shall die" was the old form of sentence passed on transgression, and we must get to the tragedy of sin before we can get to the tragedy of the Cross. They go together; in a sense they balance one another; in a sense they are the equivalent to one another.

"For this my son was dead and is alive again."

Alive, in his soul, in his conscience, in his reason, and in his sense of right; alive in his broken-heartedness.

That is the point at which true life begins.

True life begins at contrition, at self-renunciation, and at self-hatred.

When we are most deeply in tears we are nearer than we were before our loudest, sweetest songs.

"Alive," because he has come home. Life seeks its center; life yearns for fatherhood; life turns round, as it were, and in dumb quest asks for Home. The young man was alive the very moment he said, "I will arise." He was alive before the father knew it.

Many a man who would resent the idea that he prays cannot help praying, in some form, in some degree, in some sense.

The yearning, the backward look to the things long ago, the question in the heart as to how they all are at home, the old place; all these are aspects of prayer, they are expressions of desire, they are hints of a great gnawing want in the soul. It is an excellent thing for a man to take a pen and paper and sign some holy vow. He may break it to-morrow; but he has had twenty-four hours of it. That has done him good. He may not break it to-morrow; the twenty-four hours of release which he has had may prepare him for twenty-

four hours more, and the eight-and-forty hours may constitute quite a defence between him and the old temptation. It is good for a man to come to his old Church, and hear one of the old hymn tunes, and try to take part in the singing; somehow it connects him by fine filaments with things sacred and ineffable. The whole world is changed from point of view; the grass is greener, and the birds never sang with so penetrating and comforting a trill before.

These are all mysteries, but they are mysteries of education, they are all stimulants in an upward direction, they are all part of that marvellous and inexplicable apocalypse which we call Life.

"For this My Son was dead and is alive again, was lost and is found." My Son! We are sometimes startled into our real way of speaking. There is a conventional way, or there is a way to which we have been schooled, so that we say, "The next time we meet the offender we will address him swiftly."

So we might if we had a week's notice of his coming; but the Lord oftentimes makes suddenness quite a part of his process of human education. Before we are aware of it there

stands the man straight in front of us,—the prodigal,—the lost son,—the lost daughter—and we have not time to do anything but just cry.

We are going to be very haughty; we are going to treat the offender offhand.

Trust the heart that was once really in love with you, that truly and deeply felt the necessity of your nearness and comfort; and though there may be for a time alienation between you, yet there shall come another time when the old language shall utter itself, and familiar cries shall put down all the meaner music.

An illustration:—The late John B. Gough tells of a husband who acted so badly that he could no longer be kept in his own home.

He had been taken into that home again and again, and again and again he had wrecked it. In his old age he thought he would try again. He found his way to his wife, who would not speak to him, or approach him, or have anything to do with him.

She recited the story of her wrongs, and no honest man could listen to her without taking her side and rejecting the so-called husband as a plague intolerable. Mr. Gough was present

at the interview. It was a fruitless communication. The old man, he said, rose to retire, and taking up his old muffler for his throat, he was trying with feeble and fumbling hands to put it on.

He could not do so, and his wife gave it just one touch in the right direction; but one touch brought her to herself. She fell on his neck and kissed him. It is the touch, the sudden impression, the unlooked-for vision, the thing we never calculated—it is that that touches us with a new and higher, brighter and diviner relation.

"For this thy brother was dead, and is alive again." "Thy brother." "This is thy brother because he is my son." An hour before the elder brother had no brother. Even nominally he would reject and scout the idea, but the father called him "Thy Brother," because he first called him "My Son."

Until we get the larger relation right we never get the inferior relation put right. The one depends upon the other.

"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, soul, mind, strength, and"—it is out of that "and," that copulative word, that falls

all neighborliness, all true fraternity, all sacred and noble quality.

Of course the elder brother had an argument. He is a very strange sort of creature who cannot argue about something.

He would be an intolerable person who could not find fault with some other person. That rôle is always open to us if we care to make havoc of life's finest opportunities.

Find a man with an argument, and you will find a man with a grievance, and find a man with a grievance and he can never go into the feast. He feeds on hunger, he asks a blessing, in the open air upon tables spread with nothing; he takes pride in his very food. He is a home-martyr to a home-made conscience.

Never trouble about the elder brother. He is not worth explaining. You join the sacred revel, find your way to the interior banqueting-room where soul is brought to soul in new wedlock, and new fatherhood, in new sonship, and let the elder brother fill himself to satisfaction with the east wind.

"My Son"—"Thy Brother." "Let Us" make merry and be glad. Who is meant by

that "Us?" The explanation is in the Parable.

The father said to his servants: "Take such and such a course, 'and let us eat and be merry.'" And they began to be merry.

It is a poor joy that does not overflow and get down into the kitchen. It is a party not worth going to if the servants are not interested in it; it is a mean, despicable kind of uninviting show; it is not a festival.

Great emotions do not know who are men, or kings, or peasants, or servants, or masters. Great emotions touch our human nature; they are humane, civilizing, fraternizing, uniting, consolidating.

Herein is the marvellous miracle that is wrought by Christian sympathy. Men who are under the influence of the Cross have all things in common. That rule has never been suspended, and has never been put out of practice. There is a literal way of reading the story which ends in saying, "All this sort of thing has passed away." Nothing of the kind. It cannot pass away.

It is Immortal, because the love of Christ is eternal. Blessed be God that miracle is always

possible. It is always possible that love to Christ may be so great, so exuberant, so forceful, that man shall simply forget his own individuality, and seek the common good.

We need to cultivate the use of the personal pronouns. You want the "my," the "thy," the "us,"—personal, warm, sympathetic, human. This is what Christ came to work out amongst us.

This is Christ's own sweet Parable. It is a beauteous poem.

It has the music of all generations in it. He who spake it was the Son of the carpenter so-called, but He was likewise the Son of the living God. All honor to His name, His Majesty and His Power.

CHAPTER XII.

"THE JOYS OF HEAVEN TYPIFIED."

"Bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it, and let us eat and be merry. For this my son was dead and is alive again, and was lost and is found."—Ver. 23-24.

THAT the father intended a feast of joy on the recovery of his lost son is very plain from this picture, and that he desired that all the family should participate with him is quite evident. The two Parables which precede this indicate the joy of the man who had found his lost sheep, and the woman who had found the lost piece of silver. "Rejoice with me, for I have found that which was lost." "Likewise I say unto you, (said the Saviour) there is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth."

The father having clothed his son in suitable array, now proceeds to the feast. On such occasions suitable garments must be worn, as a mark of respect to the host, and also to show

their joy at the recovery of that which was lost.

It was also the custom of the Orient to prepare a feast when some distinguished personage appeared. An instance of this is found in the 18th chapter of Genesis, when it is said that "Abram ran unto the herd and fetched a calf, tender and good, and gave it unto a young man, and he hastened to dress it."

This was the occasion when the Three Angels came to visit Abraham in the garb of wayfaring men, and shows the custom then existing.

1.—"What is mystically meant by this passage? What peculiar act on the part of the Heavenly Father does Our Saviour intend by this figure?"

It may indicate that in the Church Militant there is joy and rejoicing when sinners repent and are saved; but it has a higher signification in setting forth the joys and glories of the kingdom of heaven.

"Heaven is the day of which grace is the dawn; the rich, ripe fruit of which grace is the lovely flower; the inner shrine of that most glorious temple to which grace forms the approach and outer court."

How gracious and condescending are many of the aspects in which the Scriptures exhibit the heaven of the believer.

It is held forth to our view as a Banquet; where our souls shall be satisfied forevermore; the beauties of Jehovah's face, the mysteries of Divine Grace, the riches of redeeming love, communion with God and the Lamb, fellowship with the infinite Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, being the heavenly fulness on which we shall feed.

1. *First.*—It is evident that the Jews had a very crude and imperfect idea of the happiness of the world to come; and generally associated with it the pleasures of physical satisfaction, and particularly of eating and drinking.

This idea is still held by the Mahometans, and some of the Eastern nations. It seems marvelously strange that Our Saviour, in speaking to the Jews, should use their own language, and allude to their customs and conceits, however gross they were.

2. *Second.*—Again.—The Lord Jesus Christ compares the Kingdom of Heaven to a Feast. "The Kingdom of Heaven is like unto a cer-

tain king, which made a marriage for his son." —Matt. 22: 2.

And again He tells His disciples that He "will drink no more of the fruit of the vine till He drink it new with them in His Father's Kingdom."—Matt 26: 29.

3. *Third.*—Again.—Our Saviour tells us in St. Luke's Gospel, 15: 7, "that there is joy in heaven at the repenting of a sinner," even amongst the angels.

God having, therefore, conferred upon the returning sinner those blessings and favors, rendering him fit for, and capable of heaven, what can follow more properly than actually placing him in that state for which He had prepared him?

"God so loved the world as to give His only beloved son." The Lord Jesus Christ gave Himself for a sinful world. The Holy Spirit was given to effect the divine purpose in man in regenerating and making him anew. It is, therefore, agreeable to the wisdom of Our Saviour in presenting this Parable to set forth the consummation of the Divine purpose in saving mankind.

Our Saviour's intent was to exhibit Our

Heavenly Father, crowning all those former gifts which He had conferred upon the true penitent in this life, with glory and honor, and immortality in heaven.

We shall take this literal paraphrase, and then follow the mystical interpretation. As if in the literal sense the father had said to the son, "I remember the misery, the hunger, and the hardship my son hath endured, and I pitied him, even when he well deserved all he suffered; but since the time that I have seen him returning, not only the pale looks, the sharp countenance, the dejected eyes, but I think also of the conflicts he has had with himself upon this point of returning; fear turning him back, and hope encouraging him on. I think I see the anguish of his mind, his indignation against himself, his shame for his folly, and the fear he had of my presence, till at last the reviving sense of his duty, and the confidence in the benignity of a father carried him through.

"And now that he has returned, it is not fit to heap sorrow upon sorrow, I will wipe away his tears, and repair all his sufferings.

"I will receive him, not only to my heart;

but my hand and all my stores shall be open to him. I have forgotten his rebellion, and he shall forget his sorrows, for by this act of repentance, he has effaced the memory of what he has done, and I will take care that there shall remain no mark of what he suffered; and because we have all sorrowed for him, 'let us eat and be merry, for this my son was dead and is alive again, was lost and is found.'

"Enter, O my Son, into thy father's joy, reap now the fruits of thy repentance, I am satisfied with thy return, satisfy thyself in this, that all I have shall speak thy welcome."

But Again.—In the Mystical sense, Our Heavenly Father shall thus speak to His returning Children: "I am sensible that you have lived upon 'husks,' and when you neither loved Me nor yourselves, I pitied you. It was a long time before you would understand, that in forsaking Me you had departed from your own happiness, and now that you have considered it good to return, you shall not be deceived. Although you are late in coming into My vineyard, yet I will reward you and crown you.

"I have already set some mark of favor upon

you, but these are but earnests of still greater rewards which are to follow.

"And now, says the Father, since I have prepared all these things for you, enter into My joy, and sit with Me on My Throne."

"Come ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."

The Scriptures represent this Celestial State by many Figurative Expressions.

First.—"The Heavenly state is described as a Paradise." This expression conveys the idea of a Garden of Pleasure, and has reference to the Garden of Eden, where our first parents were placed when they came from the hands of their Creator.

And as in the earthly paradise everything ministered to man's necessity or delight, and defended him from all that could disturb and annoy, so in the Heavenly Paradise, but in a far higher degree.

Second.—Again.—"This Heavenly State was called a Rest."

"There remaineth a Rest for the people of God." Thus alluding to the land of Canaan, which God gave the children of Israel as a

quiet habitation after a long and tedious servitude; so in the world to come, God gives to His children repose from all the troubles of this life, and from all the temptations of sin and Satan.

"Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, they rest from their labors, and their works follow with them."

Third.—Again.—"The Heavenly State is called a City."

"A city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God."

A city never built with hands, nor hoary with years of time; a city whose inhabitants no census can number; a city through whose streets rush no tide of business, nor nodding hearse creeps slowly with its burden to the tomb; a city without griefs or graves, without sins or sorrows, without births or burials, without marriages or mournings; a city which glories in having Jesus for its King, Angels for its Guards, Saints for its Citizens; whose walls are Salvation, and whose gates are Praise.

"The City which God has prepared" is as imperishable in its inhabitants as its materials.

Its pearl, its jasper, its pure gold, are only immortal to frame the abode of Immortals.

Fourth.—Again.—"The Heavenly State is called a Kingdom."

"Come ye blessed of My Father, inherit the Kingdom."

The idea of a kingdom suggests to us Sublimity, Grandeur, Glory and Affluence, so that in the world to come God hath prepared all the essentials for an endless and a glorious life.

Now, with these figurative expressions of the state of happiness in the world to come, the Heavenly Father says to His Children, "they shall come from the East and from the West, from the North and from the South, and they shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the Kingdom of God."

To speak fully and clearly about the Celestial State is beyond our power, and baffles our conceptions, for the Apostle Paul tells us "that eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive what God hath prepared for those that love Him."

"THE GLORIES AND FELICITIES OF HEAVEN."

These are seen in the following particulars:

First.—"In the Resurrection of the Body."

The Holy Scriptures very clearly set forth this doctrine in unmistakable terms, and being necessary to complete the happiness of the Saints. The doctrine of the Resurrection is one of great comfort, and which depends entirely upon a voluntary act of God, and its proof depends entirely upon Divine Revelation.

Philosophy could never discover it, as it was beyond the power of human thought to conceive or express it.

The Certainty of the Resurrection rests in this—"That God can raise the dead, seeing that He is Almighty. He Who could create all things, can by the same power resuscitate and quicken."

Both the Old and the New Testaments give instances of the power of God to raise the dead. For instance: "The son of the widow in Sarepta"; "The Shunamite's son," and "the man cast into the sepulture of Elisha." "Jarius's Daughter," the "Widow's son in

Nain," and "Lazarus." "How can men's bodies be raised, and with what bodies do they come?" "With men it is impossible, but not with God."

God has filled all nature with continual emblems of this doctrine. He has given a number of illustrations in the arrangements of nature and Providence."

What is night but the death of day? What is morning but its resurrection from the shades of darkness? What is the winter but the death of the year? In the dead leaves you see the emblems of death scattered wherever you go. What is Spring but a resurrection?

Look at that unsightly seed without any appearance of life thrown into the earth; and then the particles separating there springs up the plant! Behold it unfolding, and budding, and blossoming, and casting its fragrance all around. That is resurrection. We see the insect tribe give their evidence; living frequently and absolutely in different states and elements; sometimes crawling, as a worm, then lying in apparent torpor; then bursting the shell, and with wings of beauty and activity skimming the atmosphere.

Is not the Spring pleasant after a sharp winter, when the seeds rise from their quiet beds? Is it not pleasant to see God renewing the face of nature, and clothing it with former verdure, to observe the sea smoothing her brow, the fields smile, everything look gay and glorious; to hear heaven and earth sing in jubilee, and all nature triumphing as from a resurrection?

How much more pleasant and glorious to see Saints rise from their graves, restored with fresh vigor, and the body reunited to its former spirit by more firm and indissoluble bonds?

How blessed must such a meeting be, and not unlike the Prodigal, when the father recovered his long-lost son.

As to the souls of men between death and the resurrection, there is a strong probability that the souls of the departed are in a conscious state of being even in the disembodied state.

There is no reason why the soul should depend upon matter for its enjoyment, especially when we consider that whilst in the body the soul governs it, prescribes to it, denies its tendencies, and sometimes acts directly contrary to the inclinations of it.

Besides, we find that there are some things

which our souls can apprehend without any exercise of the body. All of which affords sufficient argument to convince those who assert that the soul is in an insensible sleep during its state of separation.

It is evident, therefore, that the souls of men are in the actual perception of things, and in the enjoyment of happiness, or suffering the pangs of misery, in the disembodied state.

For instance, the case of the Rich Man and Lazarus.

St. Paul said: "I have a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better," and the better state to which he referred was not a state of torpor, or insensibility, nor annihilation; but it must have been the disembodied state.

Now, if this Apostle could have supposed that in departing he entered into a state of silence after death, and not enter immediately into the fruition and glory of heaven, there could be no "strait betwixt the two, having a desire to depart and to be with Christ which is far better," but better stay here.

But "absent from the body, present with the Lord," was his doctrine and assurance. Now,

as God intends the whole man to be happy in the world to come, therefore He has promised that the body shall rise again, and therefore the Scriptures lay great stress upon the doctrine of the Resurrection.

The bodies we are encouraged to expect will be "Spiritual bodies" raised and glorified, freed from frailty, imperfection, sickness and death, and fitted with immortal powers to correspond with the immortal nature of our heavenly abode.

Second.—Again.—"Man shall not only be restored to himself, and his capabilities, but in the world to come there shall be the most delightful objects and entertainments provided for and presented to all his powers, so as to employ, fill, and delight his soul."

The body, therefore, will not only be raised and improved, made spiritual and glorious, but the intellectual powers will be enlarged and corrected. We see, therefore, that in order for the glorified state to be enlarged and improved, there must be corresponding objects to employ, and in which they are to delight themselves; if this were not so it would be torment instead of happiness.

As the all-wise Creator never brought any creatures into being which He had not fitted with a satisfaction in its kind, nor opened any power for which He had not provided suitable enjoyment.

How much less will He permit that in the other world, where He intends to make the grandest demonstrations of His goodness.

Hence heavenly felicity is represented as a feast, at which there is care taken that nothing will be offensive to the guests, and where none shall go away without full satisfaction.

The mind of man in the future state will be adorned with a greater knowledge and wisdom than is attainable here in this life.—Here we "see through a glass darkly"—but there we shall see clearly, and "know even as we are known." There we shall contemplate things in themselves, and shall understand more clearly the wisdom of Divine Providence which at present is a mystery to us.

There all the secrets of nature, the mysteries of grace, and the problems of theology will be adorned with a greater knowledge and wisdom than is attainable here in this life.

Here we "see through a glass darkly," but

there we shall see clearly, and "know even as we are known." There we shall contemplate things in themselves, and shall understand more clearly the wisdom of Divine Providence which at present is a mystery to us.

There all the secrets of nature, the mysteries of Grace, and the problems of theology will be open and made plain to us.

There conscience, or the comfortable reflection of good deeds done, and a holy life led, will find its true and just response and exquisite harmony. The resurrected body will not only become an accession to the felicity of the soul, or be happy by reflection only, but have such bodily powers as are fitted to that glorified state, and have proper and peculiar environment.

All who are thus raised and restored shall be especially fitted for that heavenly sphere. The eyes pleased with the prospect, the ears charmed with the harmony, and the whole spiritual fabric shall shine with light and beauty, and shall have a wonderful agility and vigorous motion. All this, and whatever else is good, or desirable, or glorious, or possible, shall be the portion of the saints in heaven.

Oh! happy and glorious state, indescribable and full of glory! Oh! happy day when these things shall come into our possession, and when we shall leave this terrestrial state, and pass into the celestial and heavenly inheritance!

Third.—Again.—"The Joys and Felicities of Heaven are to be Eternal."

When the long-lost sons of God shall have been recovered, renewed, restored, and glorified, he shall never be lost again. He now gives him an inheritance by an indefectible, indisputable title, "a crown immortal that shall never fade away; a kingdom that shall never be shaken; a home that shall never be broken up; a house not made with hands eternal in the heavens."

This crowns all the joys and felicities of heaven, they are eternal. Take this away, and their glory is lessened, and the brightness is dimmed. It is this Eternity of the Future State that makes the sufferings of the loss so terrible, no reprieve, no cessation, no end. It is the crown and consummation of heavenly joy that it is Eternal, that the River of Life is inexhaustible, and the fruits of the Tree of Life never fail.

O! Eternal, Eternal! that word speaks vol-

umes of comfort and boundless glory. Eternal life is all the world, and more than ten thousand worlds in one word. It is higher than the heavens, greater than the universe, it is supreme.

It is the flower of joy, the essence of comfort, the crown of blessedness, and the very soul and spirit of heaven.

Who is it that is made the subject of this blessed eternity?

Is it some angelic being who has never sinned? Some pure, bright shining intellect? Or is it some species of beings who have retained their pristine purity? Ah! no; it is for the sons of an apostate race, wilful violators of God's law, the sons of men for whom the Son of God gave His life as a sacrifice for their salvation.

It has all been provided for the sons of Adam's race, redeemed, and reclaimed.

This heavenly estate, this glorious inheritance is eternal. When the everlasting springs are dried up, when the mountains shall have been removed, the earth abolished, and the heavens pass away, that he shall survive all this, and be youthful and active through ten

thousand ages, and feel a perpetual motion, a constant circulation of life and joy in himself; this is the great and mysterious wonder. "O, the height, and depth, and breadth of the power and goodness of God the Father!" But redeemed, regenerated, and sanctified humanity is to be the subject of a never-ending eternity.

Fourth.—Again.—"The Blessed Society of the Redeemed in Heaven."

"Let us eat and be merry, for this my son was dead and is alive again, was lost and is found."

Man is a social being, and needs society, for amidst all the affluence of other things, solitude is most uncomfortable to human nature. The social law is everywhere apparent.

Flowers are arranged in species, and these have kindred wants, form and color, giving the same odor, and representing the same appearance wherever they are found.

Trees send out their seeds to the passing breeze, which deposits them in the soil below, and they spring up, nestling around the parent tree, as if they would tell of reciprocal interest; and animals group together in herds. Birds are wont to gather in companies, and sail

through airy regions for the common end; and bees center where their king alights. In all these God bids us look and see the advantage and security to be obtained in loving union.

Isolation is unnatural. God has made it so; and it is productive of most disastrous results to those who are forced into it.

Its very air is withering, and cold and sterile.

Friendly meetings and greetings, under ordinary circumstances, are pleasant and satisfying. And this life-long devotion seems the pledge of its renewal and perpetuation in another world,—

> "All are friends in heaven—all faithful friends;
> And many friendships, in the day of time
> Begun, are lasting here, and growing still."—

This, indeed, invests heavenly society with an indescribable charm, for the heavenly banquet has been spread in the Father's house, to which He invites all His children.

It is counted a great honor among men to be invited to sit at table at which great men preside, men who are distinguished in the varied walks of life as persons of genius or learning.

If this be pleasant, who can tell the joy that

will thrill the soul when the invitation of the Heavenly King shall sound in the ears, " Come, sit at My table, and listen to the eloquent sentiments of those whom I have brought from every nation and condition, all sanctified by grace, and of the fulness and sweetness of which its possessor stands ready to impart.

" That gathering," says one, " will embrace Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Joshua, Samuel, David and Josiah, Isaiah and all the Prophets, and John the Baptist, the Evangelists and Stephen, and the whole glorious Army of Martyrs."

Who shall undertake to estimate the pleasure and profit of conversing freely with him who was the first to enter heaven; with him who, in the midst of antediluvian giants, walked with God; with him who passed out of the Ark on Mount Ararat, built the first altar in the solitude of a depopulated world, and gazed on its first bow of promise; with him who built an altar on Mount Moriah, and with him who was laid an offering thereon; with him who put off his shoes on Sinai, and forty days and forty nights spake familiarly with God in the thick cloud that was on the Mount?

O, what will be the luxury of listening to the Psalmist of Israel as he strikes the heavenly lyre! What rapture must there be in talking with those holy men of old who were first Ambassadors of the King!

That banquet assembly is not, however, limited to Scripture worthies. It embraces multitudes from subsequent times.

There sit Ignatius and Polycarp, Augustine and Chrysostom. Around that board are gathered the mighty Army of Protestant Reformers, and the renowned champions of all countries and centuries.

What happiness to mingle in such society! What joy to have access to such circles! A devout saint once exclaimed, "O, blessed and glorious society! Where no contentions ever arise; where no malignant spirit interrupts the universal harmony; where no malevolent affection is ever displayed; where no provocation disturbs the serenity of the mind; where not one revengeful thought arises against the most depraved of the human race; where a single falsehood is never uttered; where folly, impertinence, and error never intrude; where no frown sits lowering on the countenance, and no

cloud ever intercepts the sunshine of benevolence; where 'Holiness to the Lord' is inscribed on every human heart; where every member is knit to another by the indissoluble bonds of affection and esteem; where a friendship is commenced which shall never be dissolved; where love glows in every bosom, and benignity beams from every countenance; where moral excellence is displayed in its most sublime, and diversified, and transporting forms; where 'a multitude which no man can number, from all nations, and kindreds, and peoples, and tongues,' join in unison with angels and archangels, principalities and powers, in swelling the song of salvation to Him that sitteth upon the Throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever."

It is such society as this that Jesus would introduce to us, for this He seeks to fit us in all these events that look so mysterious and strange to us.

The saints at the heavenly feast will be in full fellowship with all who sit at the social board of heaven, whatever be the rank from which they came, whatever position they have previously held.

Their feelings, hopes, and aims are emphatically one there. Society is held together by a bond that cannot be broken. Its strength and unity can never be unfavorably affected, for the Saviour Himself preserves its brightness and beauty.

He watches over the vast assembly; He is Himself the leading spirit, the chief joy—all that makes heaven what it is.

CHAPTER XIII.

"THE HAPPINESS AND FELICITY OF HEAVEN"

"For this My Son was dead and is alive again, and was lost and is found. And they began to be merry."

"Likewise I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the Angels of God over One Sinner that repenteth."

The Prodigal has returned, pardon has been bestowed, the Best Rode has been placed upon him, the feast has been provided, the harpers stand ready to make the sweetest music, the guests are all in their places, "and they began to be merry."

What a heavenly Type of the Heavenly Father's Home, when all the redeemed, the washed, the saved shall gather at the Marriage Feast of the Lamb? In the Parable, the Prodigal returned to his father's home, and was gra-

ciously received and made welcome, his past forgiven, his sins covered, his name restored, all of which is a picture of the returning sinner to the Heavenly Father, and the reward offered by the Father to all of His children.

We take the spiritual view of this scene, and apply it to the heavenly rewards to be bestowed upon all of God's children, the happiness and the ecstatic felicities of the heavenly world.

There is a widespread feeling in the minds of many that heaven is in some ethereal realm, entirely beyond and distinct from the physical universe, where God has established His spiritual Kingdom.

This idea doubtless has its rise in the fact that our poor sin-cursed world is for us a type of the whole created universe, and the corruption and evil which reign in and around us seem necessarily inherent in all matter.

Add to this fact that the Scriptures contrast the flesh and the spirit, making the one the type of the earthly and the other of the heavenly. If, however, we study more carefully the teachings of the Bible, we shall find no support for this idea, but, on the contrary, the strongest presumption for the opposite opinion.

Heaven is indeed supremely a spiritual world. Its King, its Laws, its Inhabitants, its Occupations, its Joys, all are spiritual.

The spiritual mind, which alone has the promise of life and peace, is centered in God. All its springs are in Him, and He is the perfect fulfilment of all its hopes and aspirations.

First.—This leads us to observe, "That in Heaven we shall enjoy the 'Beatific Vision.' The most satisfactory view which one person can have of another is that which results from beholding the face—the face of a person giving us the truest and clearest idea of the person himself. Now, such a view of Jehovah is enjoyed in Heaven. That the angels are thus favored, we know on the highest authority, even that of the Lord Jesus. Christ said: "They do always behold the face of My Father which is in Heaven," and surely the children of the family will not be less favored than those angels who are merely servants of the household.

David exclaimed: "My soul thirsteth for God for the living God; when shall I come and appear before God?" The Patriarch Job triumphantly exclaimed: "Though after my skin

worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me." And David again exclaims: "I will behold Thy face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied when I awake with Thy likeness." Paul declares: "Now we see through a glass darkly; but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then shall I know even as I am known." And John said: "We shall see Him as He is."

Thus we have Patriarch, Prophet and Apostle, Christ on earth, and angel from heaven, all testifying to the Beatific Vision.

Now, it will be this power of looking into the mind of God, of perceiving directly, and without any intervening medium, that All-Glorious Intelligence, Who is Life, and Light, and Holiness, and Love, that will constitute preeminently the bliss of a coming eternity.

This will be truly the Beatific Vision—the vision which makes blessed,—the highest bliss of which the creature is susceptible, and the very bliss especially reserved for the Lord's people in Heaven.

Oh yes! The veil which hides from us Our

Father and Our God will soon be removed. Ere long we shall see Him as He is. We shall yet look into the very heart and mind of the Most Holy. Our souls shall yet revel unsated in His presence, and drink forever an exhaustless felicity from the deepest fountains of His own unfathomable love. In enjoying this Beatific Vision "Our knowledge of God shall be both corrected and enlarged."

We can never know individuals either accurately or fully without direct intercourse. No description, or epistolary correspondence enables us to form so correct an estimate of their character as personal intercourse and conversation.

Now, this is just what it will be with God. We shall see Him, and enjoy personal fellowship with Him, our ideas of Him shall be both acurate and more profound.

Again.—Another advantage resulting from the Beatifice Vision will be "Perfect Assimilation to the Divine Character."

It is Jehovah's purpose to make His redeemed ones like Himself. They are to have restored to them both the love and the likeness of the Godhead. This great spiritual trans-

formation is begun on earth, and will be consummated in heaven.

In this world we are surrounded by the murky atmosphere of earth, and God's likeness can be but faintly daguerreotyped on our souls, and man, even though renewed, presents but a dim photograph of the Divine character whilst he remains below.

But in the life to come, the likeness will be both distinct and bright; the believer will then be a living mirror of his Maker, reflecting the beauty and brightness of God's perfections on all around. But how, it may be asked, is this to be effected?

Simply by beholding the Divine Glory. "We all," says St. Paul, "with open face beholding as in a glass the Glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image."

But another blessed effect of the Beatific Vision will be—"*The soul's perfect satisfaction in God.*"

The Prodigal Son returned to his father's house, he found a cordial reception, was restored to favor, clothed with pure garments, entered the Banquet Hall, and enjoyed satisfaction in his father's presence. In the varied

streams of earthly pleasure, or in cisterns of their own formation, have men been wont to seek for the soul's satisfaction. In the fame of the warrior, or the power of the conqueror, in the jurisprudence of the Statesman, or the eloquence of the orator, in the wealth of the rich man, or in the indulgence of the sensualist, in the learning of the scholar, or the wisdom of the sage, in the creations of genius, or in the profits of merchandise, men have hoped for gratification and supreme delight. But all in vain. By bitter experience they have found that neither one or the other, nor all combined, can ease the achings, much less satisfy the cravings of the soul.

Where, then, it may be asked, is happiness to be found?

Has she a residence anywhere on earth. Men have long been searching for her. Philosophers have long discanted on her perfections, and her praises by poets have been sung; but where, or in what, we ask, can this longed-for happiness be obtained?

Our reply is,—Only in God Himself. Man has derived his existence from the eternal, and he must rise to the fountain of his being for

his bliss. His springs are all in God, and only in God's presence, and in the full enjoyment of God's face can man be fully blessed.

Such blessedness, however, the Beatific Vision will assuredly impart; for thereby the believer shall both behold and possess the Divine likeness, and be made to the full measure of his capacity a partaker of the happiness of God Himself.

For let it be remembered that Jehovah is the happiest, as well as the holiest of all beings.

But in what, it may be asked, does the happiness of the Holy One essentially consist? We reply, "In the possession and contemplation, and exercise of His own all-glorious perfections."

God is, and ever has been, supremely happy in Himself. Jehovah requires neither the songs of angels, nor the services of mortals, to add unto His joy. Before the first morning of creation dawned, ere ever eternal silence was broken by angel's song, or primeval ether had been fanned by the seraph's pinion, God was the Supremely Blessed One; and this blessedness of His Nature, by the Beatific Vision, He will impart unto His children.

"They shall be like Him, for they see Him as He is."

Like Him in holiness, like Him in happiness, like Him in reflecting His own glorious perfec- like Him by beholding, like Him in possessing, tions for ever in the heavenly world.

Second.—Another feature of heavenly felicity will consist in having "*Fellowship with His Son Jesus Christ.*"

In beholding, therefore, by means of the Beatific Vision, the Glory of God, we shall be beholding the glory, not of the Father merely, but of the Triune—Jehovah.

Consequently, the glory of Jehovah, as beheld through the Beatific Vision, is the glory of Father, Son and Holy Ghost—the essential and eternal glory of the Triune—God, as thereby made known to the redeemed from amongst men.

Our fellowship with Christ in heaven will, however, be of a somewhat different character from that with the Father; for whilst the Father is seen there as the Representative of Godhead generally, Christ is there beheld as at once an Incarnation of Deity, and also as the Representative of Redeemed Humanity.

Intercourse with Jesus, therefore, in the upper sanctuary will disclose to us both His Personal and Official glory; that is, His glory as Immanuel—God in our nature; and His glory as Mediator—fulfilling for ever the Mediatorial functions of Prophet, Priest, and King in behalf of His people.

As Mediator, our Lord will continue to wear His human nature for ever. For the redemption of His people, the well-beloved Son of God condescended to take their nature into union with His Divine Person; that nature He retained and glorified on His ascension to heaven, and that same glorified humanity He will continue, as their Head and Representative, to wear for their sakes, in conjunction with His Deity, throughout eternity.

In other words, He will continue to be Immanuel—the God-Man, and our Kinsman Redeemer forever.

The saints, then, in glory shall have intercourse with Jesus, and reign with Him as their Mediatorial King forever.

"They shall reign," we are told, "in life by one Jesus Christ." They shall not only be "heirs of God, but joint heirs with Christ."

How vast their dominions!—all worlds. How numerous and dignified their subjects!—"Thrones, and dominions, and principalities, and powers,"—that is, all the various orders of intelligent creatures put under them. How great their treasury!—the revenues of all creation placed at their disposal.

Oh, surely there are no thrones like those of Immanuel and His saints—no crowns of such peerless lustre—no sceptres so blissful in their exercise, and so irresistible in their might!

Angels wait upon them. Jehovah is glorified by and rejoices over them. The wicked no longer disturb them. The unfallen in all places of their dominions love and obey, and honor them.

The whole creation has arrived at a degree of felicity never before experienced. Satan is vanquished, sorrow abolished, and Death himself is dead. Jesus and His brethren are triumphant.

They possess the Kingdom, their rule is blessing, their joys are increasing, their glory is brightening, their fame expanding, and their kingdom shall know no end.

Again.—"Intercourse with Jesus as the

Eternal Prophet of His Church in Glory will be enjoyed.

As "a Teacher come from God," Our Lord made known to His disciples many of "the mysteries of the Kingdom," whilst he was here below; but He plainly intimated to them that His instructions were not to terminate with His earthly career. "I have many things," said He, "to say unto you, but ye cannot hear them now."

And in accordance with this, we find Him in His Intercessory Prayer, after entreating that His people might be with Him in His glory, saying, "I have declared unto them Thy name, and will declare it," thus expressly asserting that the instructions commenced on earth should be continued in heaven.

Christ, as Prophet, is the Light of His Church on Earth; and, in the continued exercise of the same office, He will also be the Light of the Church in Heaven; for of the New Jerusalem we read: "The city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine for it; for the Glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the Light thereof."

But what, it may be asked, will Jesus here-

after teach His saints. We reply, He will teach them much regarding God. How little of the Most High can we know whilst here below! Who now by searching can find out God? Who can find out the Almighty unto perfection?

The Unknown now shall become known hereafter, and Jesus will be the Great Revealer. He will enable His people to comprehend, with a clearness of which they have now no idea, both the incommunicable and moral perfections of the God-Head, and unfold to them as full as may be permitted, or possible for creatures to understand, those eternal and essential relations which subsist between Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

He shall also make them acquainted with the "Various Departments of Creation." Pent up for the present in this veriest corner of the universe, we know nothing of the other portions of our Father's dominions. In order, therefore, that His people may discern and appreciate His glory, the Well-beloved of the Father will unfold to His redeemed the glories of His great creation, and as a workman's glory is exhibited in his works, so will the saints

be taught to discern Messiah's glory in the things which He hath made. How delightful, then, will be their intercourse with Christ, as He expounds to them the mechanism of the universe; and not only exhibit to them the various worlds and systems of immensity, but explain When, and How, and for What, each was made.

Again.—"Jesus as the Great Instructor in Heaven will explain to His Redeemed in Glory the Marvellous Dispensations of His Providence toward them."

Clouds and darkness surround them, and we cannot at present understand the dealings of the Lord. Even the most prominent facts in His Providence are a mystery.

Why God permitted sin to exist, and why He tolerates its continuance, we cannot tell. Why has Christianity, after so long a time, made so little progress? Why is the Church still clothed in sackcloth; and why does the Prince of Darkness so long prevail? are questions we cannot answer now.

Jesus, however, will answer them all satisfactorily by-and-by. In the meantime, let us remember that the trials to which God's people are subjected in this world are intended to pre-

pare them for the precise position which they are each to occupy in the world to come. "Giving thanks unto the Father, Who hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light."

We sometimes complain and inquire: "O Lord, why dealest Thou with me thus?" and Jesus answers: "What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter," thus teaching His followers to be patient, to pray, to hope, until the day of the revelation of all things, when Jesus will show the wisdom and beneficence of all providences, when He will make all things plain.

But Again.—"The Eternal Priesthood of Christ, and Fellowship with Him will be an unspeakable delight."

That the Priesthood of Christ is destined to be eternal is a truth expressly taught in many passages of the Word of God.

Thus it is declared—He "abideth a Priest continually,"—that "He is a Priest forever" —and that "This man, because He continueth ever, hath an Unchangeable Priesthood."

Prophecy declares that He should be a "Priest upon His Throne"; and that, too,

when having "built the Temple of the Lord," He should "bear its glory, and sit and rule upon His Throne."

But the Temple shall not be fully built or completed till after the resurrection and judgment; and therefore the period spoken of as that in which "He shall be a Priest upon His Throne" must be subsequent to those events, that is, it must refer to the period of His exaltation in His final glory; and teaches us that He shall exercise His sacerdotal function amid all the honors of His reign.

The above texts are amply sufficient to establish "The Perpetuity of Our Lord's Priesthood. His Priesthood, for instance, will bring Him before them as the Lamb slain."

In the discharge of His priestly office when on earth, He offered Himself a sacrifice for the sins of His people, and this great act of His Priesthood will be ever commemorated in the sanctuary above. Accordingly, we find Him appearing in the Church of the First-Born as "a Lamb that had been slain."

The traces of Gethsemane have not been entirely effaced by His entrance into glory. The marks of the Cross appear amid the honors of

the throne, and the scars of conflict may still be seen in the body of the Conqueror.

Oh, yes, the great object of interest in the Heavenly Temple is Christ the Crucified; for through whichever of the Twelve Gates of Pearl we view the Celestial City, the first sight which attracts us is the Priest upon the Throne, and the song which enraptures us is the song to "The Lamb which was slain." Or if again, as the Leader of the Armies of Heaven, He is seen at the head of its embattled hosts, He is arrayed in a garment that has been dipped in blood; or when for a moment the music ceases, and silence is heard in heaven, it is only that its redeemed choirs may "look unto the sufferings of Christ," and then again their hymns of blessing are heard louder, and their palms of triumph wave loftier, and their crowns of glory lie lower at the feet of Him who was dead, but is alive again, and liveth forevermore.

But in thus contemplating the Perpetual Priesthood of Christ, we are to bear in mind also "His Perpetual Intercession with the Father. For as their High Priest He not only purchased for them the blessings of the covenant by His death, He also secures the com-

munication and continued enjoyment of these blessings by His intercession."

His advocacy is as necessary as His atonement; and as He has been continued by the oath of the Father "A Priest for Ever"—not after the law of a carnal commandment, but "after the power of an endless life," and so He will continue to discharge for ever that function of His priestly office, which consists in pleading for His saints before the Throne of God.

This is necessary to His people's continuance in heaven. Christ sustains them there; for remove Immanuel from before the golden altar of heavenly meditation, and His people would be instantly undone. Their crowns of glory would fall irrecoverably and wither, and their palms of victory fall irrecoverably from their hands. No longer would they be allowed to walk the golden streets of the Golden City, or listen to its soul-inspiring minstrelsy, their golden harps would be at once unstrung, and the music of the celestial choirs be hushed forever. But He lives.

But again, we observe, "That intercourse with Jesus, even in His human nature, as the

Elder Brother of the Redeemed Family, will be indescribably blessed."

Fellowship with Him as perfect Man will be fellowship with Him in all the perfections of manhood in highest development.

We esteem it a privilege to enjoy even here the society of eminent and illustrious men; but the most celebrated characters whose society we court are generally only distinguished for one or two real or fancied excellencies, to which they owe all their greatness. Now, let us select all the endowments of the greatest men that ever lived, and combine them without defect in one character, and after having done so, we shall have only made the faintest approximation possible to the character of the Man Christ Jesus.

In Him the saints will find and enjoy, in full perfection, a concentration of all the excellencies that ever adorned humanity. The philosophic powers of Bacon or Locke, the poetic talents of a Milton or a Homer, the eloquence of a Demosthenes or a Cicero, the genius of a Newton or a La Place, the merely natural and intellectual endowments of men, have been all derived from Jehovah—Jesus, and in full per-

fection are to be found in Him; whilst He is the source of all those moral and spiritual excellencies for which patriarchs, prophets, apostles, and all His other saints and servants of all ages have been distinguished.

All are to be found, and through all eternity will be enjoyed in Christ. Here, then, in the fruition of the merely human perfections of Jesus we have a fountain opened up, of which, in this present life, we can form but the very faintest conception.

If He should withdraw Himself, the glory of Paradise would be gone, the beauty of the Holy City faded, its charm fled, and deepest gloom would darken the heavenly atmosphere, and there would be night there. Society would lose its attraction, though angel and archangel, and saint of every degree remain.

The social attractions of the upper sphere are, indeed, very great, when viewed from points already mentioned; but every Christian will say, "It is not enough, unless Jesus, our Elder Brother, be there. It is not shining streets, nor pearly gates, nor any external consideration that is going to satisfy the Christian heart in heaven. It is not friend, angel,

cherubim or seraphim that will fill his soul to satisfaction; but the smile of Him Who hath redeemed the soul. This is the prime characteristic of heavenly joy, the distinctive and blessed feature of its society, its crowning glory, and this is what hope exults in as it looks eagerly forward from every Christian observatory.

Christ is the Christian's watchword, his talisman, his all; but, with his highest conceptions, it is little that he knows while he is an occupant of the flesh.

The redeemed of the earth must pass into the full light of immortality before they comprehend and fully appreciate perfectly the salvation procured for them by the atoning Lamb of God.

They must mingle in the society of heaven, and hear the saved and the pure tell of joyful completeness before they will realize the whole of its mighty meaning. Ah! They must hear Jesus Himself say, "Good and faithful" before the fountain will pour its full tide of bliss upon the ravished and satisfied soul.

Christ, saints, and angels are there; friends, connections, and apostles, martyrs, and prophets are there, all guests at the feast.

CHAPTER XIV.

"THE SOCIETY OF THE REDEEMED IN HEAVEN."

WHAT is the nature of heavenly society? William Wilberforce once said to the celebrated Robert Hall, "What is your idea of heaven?" And Robert Hall said: "My chief conception of heaven is that it is a Rest." "And mine," said Wilberforce, "is that it is a place of Love." Others have been wont to contemplate it as a Temple, a place of Worship; and some, like Dr. Owen, have viewed it chiefly as a place where we shall behold the glory of Christ; whilst the sorely tried Baxter appears to have agreed with the afflicted Robert Hall; for, in the treatise which he has written concerning it, and which he has left as one of his richest legacies to the Church of God, he describes is as "The Saint's Everlasting Rest."

But if we might presume to tell how we love to think of heaven, we would accept the words of the blessed Christ as found in the 14th chapter of John, "In my Father's house are many

mansions," the home of the children of God, the final dwelling-place of all the sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty.

Among the sweetest sounds that vibrate through the earth, none is sweeter than home; none hath greater power to stir the fount of feeling and awake pure and holy thoughts and worthy affection.

All the choicest blessings of life cluster here, and there are none so hardened or perverse as not to have a chord somewhere which can be touched by the tender remembrances of home.

Wherever man may roam, and whatever he may be, or under whatever circumstances, and with whatever prospects, his heart and his home are synonymous things; wherever one is the other will be.

There are few, indeed, who have not some cherished spot around which fond memories linger,—a spot loved above all others, the love of which may be pressed to the heart as a talisman for safety in a path thickly set with evil.

And why? Because the blessed associations connected with them; because in each there are heart resting-places—arbors where living tendrils creep and twine, forming unions and

alliances of most beautiful growth, so that to assail them is to touch life in its tenderest and most sacred form.

It makes no difference whether it be in a burning or a frigid zone. If loving hearts intertwine, there is a spot where sweetness and fertility shed their grateful influence to cheer human souls.

It cannot be otherwise, for the home is a God-ordained institution. He has made it the deepest and most central want of the soul, so far as earth and time are concerned.

There are loves, affections, hopes, and desires in every nature, that can be fully met and expanded only by the quiet, subduing, elevating influences of home. The ties which bind the family circle together are stronger and purer than all others.

In its disinterestedness, its unselfishness, there "is less of earth and more of heaven" than in anything else on earth.

Language fails to limit the influence of a truly happy home—happy in the true and highest sense, which means simply that it be a Christian home.

If, then, the idea of the home be so much to

us here, if it be a necessity to have some place where to bestow our affections, which are undying in their nature, and if we adopt the conclusion, as we certainly must, that immortality is a divinely-conferred gift upon all men, then it becomes a question infinitely more important than all others. Where is the Home of the Soul?

If our earthly homes are so much to us, having power to control the whole character, subduing, reclaiming when nothing else can, challenging remembrance and love to the latest hours of life, what must be the future home, the eternal dwelling-place, of the soul? The Word of God describes it as a Family—the Family of God the Father. It is as His Family that God Himself loves best of all to view His saints, and it is as such that He so frequently speaks of them in His Word.

For by means of the family tie, which through Christ He has established betwixt Himself and them, He has brought them into a closer union with Himself, and nearer His heart and throne than even the cherubim enjoy.

Yes, when "Predestinated unto the adoption of children," we were brought into the inmost

circle of our Master's affections, and became of all His creatures the objects of His tenderest and choicest love. Our Heavenly condition, then, will be the family condition, where, as members of the same happy household, we shall sit together at our Father's table, and bask for ever in the sunshine of our Father's smiles.

Nor is this view of heaven as that of a united and rejoicing family at all inconsistent with those other views mentioned; for, does the afflicted and weary sufferer of earth long, like Robert Hall or Richard Baxter, for Rest in heaven?

Our earthly home may be a type of the heavenly home. The Father received the returning Prodigal to his home, and just so will the Heavenly Father receive all who love and fear Him, and are faithful unto death, into His heavenly home.

"At the best estate, we are only pilgrims and strangers in the earth; but heaven is to be our eternal home."

Death will never knock at the door of that mansion, and in all that land there will not be a single grave. We now look through a glass darkly, but then face to face; now corruption,

then incorruption; now mortality, then immortality.

Home! Once there, let earthly sorrows howl like storms and roll like seas. Home! Let thrones rot and empires wither! Home! Let the world die in earthquake struggle and be buried amid procession of planets and dirge of spheres. Home! Let everlasting ages roll in irresistible sweep! Home! No sorrow, no crying, no tears, no death; but home! Sweet home! Beautiful home! Everlasting home! Home with each other! Home with angels! Home with God,—Home!

But Again.—We observe that in the case of the returning Prodigal to his father's house, "There was mutual recognition—the father recognized the son, and the son recognized the father."

And in making the spiritual application, we may state that there will be "*mutual recognition in Heaven*, even amongst disembodied spirits immediately after death and previous to the resurrection."

It is said that each of the three patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, was upon his death "gathered to his people."

Now this declaration does not refer to the burial of these patriarchs, because, if so applied, it would not be true; for Abraham was interred "in the cave of the field of Machpelah, before Mamre," which he had purchase of the children of Heth—a new burying-place, in which none of his ancestors had ever been laid.

Isaac's being "gathered to his people" is represented as taking place immediately after his death and before his burial; whilst we find that Jacob's funeral did not take place till at least forty days after he had been "gathered to his people."

The declaration, then, that in death these ancient worthies were "gathered to their people," is intended to inform us that so soon as their souls had quitted their bodies, and before these bodies were committed to the tomb, these illustrious saints had been received into the communion of their pious ancestors, who were already in those abodes of glory, where the spirits of the holy dwell. Surely, then, if thus "gathered to" them, they would easily recognize them. Abraham certainly would have no difficulty in recognizing "his son,—

his only son Isaac, whom he loved," when that beloved one rejoined him in the habitation of the blest.

And Rebekah would have no difficulty in recognizing her favorite Jacob when re-united to her in the mansions of the just.

Here, then, we have reunion and recognition immediately after death, and long before the resurrection.

So also we read of Aaron, that he "died on Mount Hor, and was gathered unto his people." But none of Aaron's ancestors either died on Mount Hor or were buried there. When, therefore, it is said of Israel's first high priest, that, on his dying at Hor, he was "gathered to his people," the meaning is, that though the body was committed to a lonely sepulchre on that mountain, too, yet that which formed pre-eminently himself, his soul, was doomed to no such solitude, but was, immediately on leaving the body, "gathered" or admitted to the society of his sainted ancestors.

When, too, God said to Moses, "Get thee up and die in the mount whither thou goest up, and be gathered to thy people," He did not mean to tell His servant that, by being "gath-

ered to his people," he was to be interred along with them. Oh, no! The great Law-giver of Israel, like his brother, was destined to occupy a solitary grave, far from the sepulchres of his fathers; for God Himself, we are told, "buried Moses in a valley in the land of Moab, over against Beth-peor: but no man knoweth of his sepulchre until this day."

When, therefore, it is said of the brothers Moses and Aaron that they were "gathered to their people," it is meant they were reunited to them.

That this Scripture phrase, "gathered to his people," does not signify burial, but is used to express immediate admission to the fellowship of departed saints, is still further evident from the fact that in the Bible it is spoken of as one of the peculiar privileges of the believer, which the rich worldling, and other unconverted characters, will not enjoy. Thus in Job we read: "The rich man shall lie down, but he shall not be gathered," that is, "They lay down in death, nor were they gathered among the righteous, but opened their eyes in perdition."

The Sadducees questioned Jesus concerning the resurrection, by stating the case of a woman

who had seven husbands, and then said unto Him, "Whose wife will she be in the resurrection?"

And Jesus said: "Now that the dead are raised even Moses showed at the bush, when he called the Lord, the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob: For He is not the God of the dead, but of the living." In other words, "To Him all are living." We inquire, "Where are the dead? What becomes of the spirits of the departed between death and the resurrection?"

To God all that have lived do live; and in the eye of God there are none dead.

God's Word declares that "the dust shall return to the earth as it was, and the spirit to God, who gave it."

Here body and soul are spoken of as parting at death for two separate destinations. Although the body goes down to its mother elements, yet the soul shall have an independent existence without the aid of a bodily organism in the disembodied state.

Our Lord's Parable of the rich man and Lazarus bears directly on this point. It is impossible to turn aside its force by designating

the chief parts of the Parable as "drapery" meant only to grace its substance.

"Lazarus dies and is carried by angels into Abraham's bosom!" Did Our Lord so speak while knowing that such an event never did occur? "The rich man also died and was buried, and in hell he lifted up his eyes in torment!" Would Our Lord have said this, if it were so that no man ever entered that place of torment until the resurrection? Did Our Lord mean that the resurrection was past? No; men were still on the earth, and even the brothers of the rich man were not yet dead.

No ingenuity can cover the fact that this parable sanctions the belief that, immediately after death, men are still in conscious life, the good and holy in rest, the wicked in torment.

Again.—"The Transfiguration of Christ offers a memorable scene, wherein we see the dead living."

Who are the three that meet on Mt. Tabor? Elijah, who never died! Moses, who died and was buried, and Jesus still in the flesh. Yet all are living. They represent the three stages of life. Jesus, with His mortal body, conversing of His decease which He should accom-

plish at Jerusalem; Moses, with death past, and his body awaiting the resurrection; and Elijah, with body and soul both perfected in life. Wondrous Three! One in the body, one out of the body, and one having the whole man glorified.

What a majestic embodiment of the truth—That all live!

Again.—"When Our Lord was on the Cross, a poor culprit turned to Him, praying, 'Lord remember me when Thou comest into Thy Kingdom.'"

The thief probably looked for salvation at some future period, as it is here stated, "When Thou comest!" The answer cut off all waiting, for He said, "To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise."

Now, did this mean, "From this day forth, to the end of the world, thou shalt lie senseless and dead, but after that thou shalt be with Me?" Ah, no! It could not be. It was immediate transition.

St. Paul, in speaking of the difference between our condition, as in the body and out of it, says: "Whilst we are home in the body, we are absent from the Lord. We are confidant,

I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord." The expression "absent from the body" cannot mean the resurrection body, but must mean in the disembodied state.

While "at home in the body" we may have fellowship with the Father, yet as this is only by faith, and not by sight, it is called "being absent from the Lord," whereas the condition into which we are carried, when removed from the body, is so much above it, that it is called "being present with the Lord."

St. Paul, while here, lived a noble life. To him to live was joy, was usefulness, was communion with God, was, in fact, much blessedness; yet he said, "To me to live is Christ, yet to die is gain."

Then, surely, it was not to enter into nothingness while the world stands! From the life of an apostle to a state of torpor and inanimativeness is not gain, but blank and benumbed loss.

St. Paul expressed a "desire to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better." The "better state" he had in view was evidently "the disembodied state." Is it, then, better to

be nothing than to be an apostle?—to be as inanimate as water spilled upon the ground, than to be communing with God and serving men?

Who can reconcile to his heart the notion of Christ's Ambassador desiring to depart and be a blank? That cannot be.

At last we see that great soul, standing on the verge of the world to come, saying: "I have finished my course, I have kept the faith, henceforth there is laid up for me a crown, etc."

Has Paul passed into a torpor state of unconsciousness? Ah, no! When Stephen was laid upon the martyr altar, his eye glowing at the sight of his Lord, and in ascending he exclaims: "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." How does the Lord receive the spirits of his servants? Does He fill them with a portion of His own joy? Or does He quench all their light, and hold them inanimate, till the host of martyrs shall be complete? It cannot be.

St. John says: "I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the Word of God, and for the testimony which they held."

Here, then, are the souls of martyrs living, patiently awaiting the final resurrection.

What a crowd of questions rise before us at this time. Are all men who ever departed from earth, except Enoch and Elijah, inanimate? When the hand of Cain was lifted against Abel, did it deprive his spirit of hundreds and thousands of years of consciousness of life." Has Abel never beheld the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world, whose offering he foreshadowed?

When Enoch was translated by God, did he find himself the only human being in the sky? and has he, to this day, seen no man join the blessed but Elijah only? Has Moses never yet had his heart's desire when he prayed, "Show me Thy glory?"

Has Aaron never witnessed the meditation of the Great High Priest within the veil? Has David sung no song from the day when his right hand forgot its cunning?

Has Isaiah never beheld the "Man of Sorrows" with other eye than that of prophecy? Has John never walked in the light since the moment when his aged eye closed upon the sun?

Has the spirit of the first Christian martyr (Stephen) found the hand into which it committed itself cold as death? And the great cloud of witnesses, whose memory calls to the heavens, are they dark tenants of some lifeless pit? Are patriarchs, prophets, and apostles, yea, are even the lesser saints, whom our own eyes have seen, dead, inactive, unconscious as the dust to this day?

No, no! All are living. All who have been are, and will continue to be, living, immortal beings. Not one, who ever thought, or felt, or acted upon this earth, but are thinking, feeling and acting now. Ascend the stream of death right up to its source, and we find that only bodies sink in its tide. Spirits go upward.

Where are the worthy blessed dead? We answer, They are at home with God, in the enjoyment of conscious immortal life.

"Who are these arrayed in white robes, and whence came they?" John said: "Thou knowest. These are they that came up out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

Therefore, are they before the throne and serve Him day and night in His Temple."

If, then, there is conscious existence in the disembodied state, it follows as a consequence that there must be "mutual recognition."

CHAPTER XV.

"RECOGNITION IN THE HEAVENLY WORLD."

"For this my son was dead and is alive again, was lost and is found."—Luke XV. Chapter, 32 verse.

SHALL we know each other in the future life? is a question that the heart has asked for long ages. It went side by side with the question of immortality in the earliest periods of inquiry.

In the same breath that one was asked was the other submitted. If death was only to be the introduction to a new life, the continuation of an endless chain of being, then how much would the spirit take along,—how much retain of its earth's connections?

The question has never ceased in interest; still we hear the inquiry:

"Shall there be bright ones in that better land,
Who still the old familiar faces wear,
Amid the beauty of that spirit-land,
For us the loveliest and the brightest there?

" When the freed spirits 'face to face' shall see,
Clothed in new beauty, gloriously fair,
Shall it not then a crowning rapture be,
Each other's bliss, each other's smiles to share?"

There are three postulates upon which this doctrine of recognition in the future rests. The *first* is "The immortality of the soul." "The human soul," says Leighton, "thirsts after a good invisible, immaterial, and immortal, to the enjoyment whereof the ministry of a body is so far from being absolutely necessary that it feels shut up and confined by that to which it is now united as by a partition wall, and groans under the pressure of it."

"Nobody shall drive me from the immortality of the soul," says Atticus, in Cicero; and the words of the world-renowned Seneca are expressive of peculiar pleasure relative to views of the soul's eternity and their actual belief.

When his sun began to decline, and the remains of a broken constitution only appeared, "I resigned myself," said he, "to so glorious a hope at that of removing into the immensity of time, and into the possession of endless ages."

Jesus Christ brought life and immortality to

light, full-orbed and glorious light by the gospel, and showed that Man was an Immortal being. O listen, man! A voice within, a natural instinct, a forcible intuition speaks the startling words, "Man, thou shalt never die!" Celestial voices hymn it around our souls. According harps, by angel fingers touched, send forth the song of our great immortality. This doctrine must be true, if we are to know and be known in the future world.

Second.—Another truth that must be granted, and that is "The discrete existence of the soul after Death."

By discrete existence after death, I mean the individuality of the soul, to continue unchanged in contradistinction to those who argue that individuality is lost in God, or, in other words, the theory of "absorption."

The advocates of absorption contend that a snowflake is not annihilated when it falls into the sea, but absorbed in the water; and thus they conclude that the personal identity of the soul is lost in God. But the Scriptures everywhere teach that man will retain his individuality and personal identity after death.

Third.—Again, another truth that must be

granted, and that is "The uninterrupted consciousness of men and women after death; and between death and the resurrection."

These three things, immortality, individuality and uninterrupted consciousness of the soul must be granted if recognition is to take place in the future world.

We, therefore, joyfully and confidently state "That we shall know each other in the world to come." By this proposition we mean to include a recollection of the events, of persons, and of this life, just as precisely as we remember events and persons from childhoood to old age, and from one part of the earth to another.

In the world to come we shall recognize the persons we have known here. This follows necessarily from the idea of personal identity. Death makes no change in personality or mental constitution. It only separates the mental from the physical which drops back to the dust. We are taught by the Scriptures to believe that when liberated from the body, the mind continues to think, perceive, remember, and be conscious.

Therefore, after death, we shall have the

same nature as now. If personal identity does not carry over into the future, then we shall not only be strangers to each other, but strangers to ourselves.

Personal identity inheres in consciousness. To be conscious in the future life that I am the identical person of this life involves the consciousness of remembering the acts, thoughts, affections and volitions of my personal existence.

If identity remains it is through consciousness of the remembered past. I shall identify myself on the plains of eternity by remembering my previous history as I do now in the successive years of my present life.

What a wondrous creature is man! The varied chords of the human soul, and the numberless strings twined about the heart, are so tuned and arranged as to emit sounds of sweetest melody, producing vibrations that do not die out in reaching the utmost boundary of the shores of time, but extend on down the eternal ages, increasing in power and effect, unless they are misused and hopelessly out of tune.

The Almighty never tuned any other instrument at all comparable with the soul of man.

Let a breath of heaven sweep over it, and it awakens songs that angels listen to with rapturous delight, that even Jesus loves to hear, He, into whose ear comes the harmony of all worlds and systems of worlds; yet the happiness of the soul is highest and sweetest music.

Give it the inspiration of love, and it is heard warbling music of richest strain. Touch it lightly and notes of sympathy are produced that soothe, as if by magic, the most anxious and depressed.

Put down thy lips, and blow softly and sweetly upon the supple strings, and a low, sweet cadence mingles in pleasing harmony, making the duller passages of life bright and joyful; but blow rudely and unskilfully, and it awakens sounds that are harsh and discordant. The soul of man is a finely constructed instrument, and has numerous keys. One of these is "Remembrance." Touch it and, like an electric power, it startles and sets in motion the sluggish thought and feeling.

Thus it is that "Memory" is the great warder of the castle of man's soul. It is the key to the whole problem of recognition in the

future world. If memory remains intact, the whole question is well night settled.

There are those who would have memory destroyed in the other world; but see what the destruction of memory involves!

It blots out all past history. It carries down to oblivion all our knowledge, and constitutes all men moral and intellectual babes.

This would be as though we had never existed. The past a blank, the future unconditioned in character and destiny. This theory is absurd and untenable. The soul of man is to be transferred in its entireness across the river of death, with all its ideas and knowledge intact, just as the traveller is the same person on the other side of the Atlantic ocean, though under a different government.

Personal identity is preserved; consciousness is permanent, all our mental faculties are to be carried over into the future.

Another key in the organ of the soul is Friendship; and friendship is to be perpetuated in heaven. Our deep social instincts and Scripture teaching both agree in teaching that we shall dwell together in society in that world.

We are so constituted that our happiness de-

pends on fellowship with our kind. If death was only to be the introduction to a new life, the continuation of an endless chain of being, then, how much would the spirit take along, how much retain of its earth connections?

The question of recognition in the future world has never ceased to interest mankind; still we hear the inquiry: "Shall we know each other there?"

"Blest be the tie that binds our hearts in Christian love; the fellowship of kindred minds is like to that above." The tie is not of earthly origin, it binds to the throne of God, and encircling this, embraces the whole brotherhood, the entire family of the redeemed, awakening a common interest that will grow broader and deeper as eternity rolls on. The idea of loneliness is misery. Solitude is torment, and exile is hell.

The Bible beautifully represents the saints as a great family in the same place, before the same throne, joining in the same songs, and mingling in the same scenes of joy and worship.

The question naturally arises, "How shall we know each other?" There are three methods by which this may be done.

First.—"Characteristic identity and resemblance in the spiritual body." Though radically transformed in substance and gloriously changed in appearance, yet the Bible warrants the belief that there will be something of personal identity and resemblance characterizing the spiritual body, so that friend and friend, husband and wife, parent and child will readily recognize each other there.

St. Paul says: "To every seed his own body,"—"so also in the resurrection of the dead." Seed wheat produces a wheat body; so the dead arise in human form. When Christ was transfigured in the glory of appearance, His disciples still recognized Him.

It is evident, therefore, that there will be such personal resemblance in the spiritual body as will enable us to recognize those we knew and loved upon earth.

Notwithstanding all the changes and revolutions effected by growth, dissolution and resurrection, yet this does not affect the identity of the soul.

Second.—"Another method by which recognition will most certainly arise will be in the

social intercourse of persons communing together in one place."

Sometimes in earthly journeys two persons meet, and they begin a conversation. First the scenery is mentioned, then one place and then another, contrasts are drawn, names are mentioned. Interest deepens. Questions are asked and answered. Familiar names and scenes are spoken of. Distance and years vanish.

The past comes back again. Their names are pronounced. They are filled with surprise, and it comes to pass that they were schoolmates many years ago.

"Memory" recalls the tones of the voice, the flash of the eye, and the same soul is seen shining in the natural face.

The long years disappear, and they are friends as if never parted. In a similar way, by natural converse, may the saints know each other in the great hereafter.

Ransomed souls full of rapture will interchange reminiscence, wondering at the bliss that crowns them. They recall their conversion, and the events of gracious experience, and the way in which they passed up to the New Jerusalem.

In this way, if by no other, namely, "by intimate social intercourse," shall we know each other in heaven.

Third.—"Another method by which we may know each other in the future world will be by instantaneous recognition."

We shall know each other at sight. We shall be the same persons, but in an immortal dress. The soul here shines through the physical body, and plays upon the countenance in expressions never to be forgotten. There is every reason to believe that this will be wonderfully intensified in the spiritual body; so that the soul will be fully mirrored in the celestial body.

There is no basis for the assumption that finite spirits are formless and invisible. Because invisible to us, proves nothing against being visible to each other. Every intimation of the Bible is that angels and finite spirits have forms, and are visible to each other; and there is every reason to believe that we shall have spiritual faculties to recognize spirits, just as fully as by our senses we perceive material objects at the present.

We shall not be all precisely alike, as that would be a violation of the universal law of va-

riety in unity. Every soul, as well as every body, has its individuality, which distinguishes it from another soul, or another body. Why should this law be changed in the world to come? We shall all maintain our own selfhood, and there will be some way of distinguishing one from another.

We are informed that angels are not all exactly alike. There are different ranks and orders of angelic beings, and they are distinguishable one from the other.

For instance, "There is Gabriel," who appeared to Daniel, and there is Michael, who disputed about the body of Moses.

Now, if they were precisely alike, there would be no way of knowing "Gabriel from Michael." The fact that they are named is proof that they are different to each other. Christ says of the redeemed in heaven that they "Are as the angels of God."

Without knowing what the marks of identification may be, all analogy, all presumption, all Scripture, and all rational probability warrant the assurance that there will be such resemblance to our former selves disclosed, as will lead to direct and immediate recognition.

The whole tenor of revelation is suggestive of this consoling doctrine. Jesus Christ said: "What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter." And St. Paul said: "For now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face," and from these Scriptures we learn that we shall enjoy full knowledge of what is partial here.

Take the case of Moses and Elias on the Mount of Transfiguration. Both Elias and Moses are recognized on that remarkable occasion.

Take the case of the "Rich man and Lazarus," and we find that they are represented as being conscious, that memory was intact, and that perpetual identity remained. "Seeing Abraham afar off and Lazarus in his bosom." Here we have the doctrine of conscious existence in the disembodied state, and unquestioned recognition.

Again.—"The description of the final judgment, the doctrine of recognized identity is clearly set forth." "So then every one of us shall give an account of himself to God." "For God will bring every work into judgment with every secret thing."

Such passages teach personal identity, and they reveal that "memory" will unfold its many records and be thoroughly active.

The whole life will be brought under review, and all events made plain, and persons and places will be remembered and our dealings with such persons at such places clearly made known.

When memory is so explicit and full as to recall every "work," "word" and "secret thing," it cannot fail to recollect the persons connected with such events.

We here give a brief review of the argument in support of the doctrine under consideration, which includes the following points: "The Preservation of Conscious Identity," "And the Perpetuation of all our Ideas, our Knowledge, our Character and Faculties, and pre-eminently Memory," and the argument is conclusive.

Then let us add the "Scripture Evidence," and that it has been a universal belief in all ages, among all classes, Gentile, Jew, Christian, Pagan, Savage and Sage, and is a deep instinct in man; and we must admit it as true.

Heaven cannot be a home, if there be no

recognition in it. Faith in the doctrine gives comfort to the dying, and flings the light of a sublimer joy upon the portals of the heavenly home.

An illustration.—"'Twas a drear midnight when a little motherless child, with lips almost frigid, said to her weeping father, now wifeless, and soon to be childless: 'Good-bye, papa, good-bye. Mama has come for me to-night. Don't weep, papa, we'll all meet again in the morning.'"

"O wild is the tempest and dark is the night,
But soon will the day break the dawning;
Then friendship of yore shall blossom once more.
And we'll all meet again in the morning."

Death will not break the continuity of existence, but only widen the soul's capacity and its sphere of activity. The same blissful friendships and hallowed loves that cheer and brighten our earthly lives will blossom fairer still in that immortal clime.

The same God and Saviour, "Whom having not seen we love, and in Whom, though now we see Him not, yet believing, we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory," we there shall

worship face to face, and beholding his glory, shall be "changed into the same image from glory to glory."

How blessed to feel that Heaven is not some far-off dim and shadowy state, an unseen and invisible universe, where nothing is real and substantial, and where the soul must flit in an ethereal void without locality, distance or time; but that it is rather the great and glorious universe of God about us, embracing a place and a state of being, and which includes all that completes the happiness of the redeemed; where there will be solid streets to walk upon, heavenly air to feed our inspiration, light to break in beauty upon our eyelids, sounds as soft as symphonies to warble upon our hearing, odors sweeter than the scent of roses, fruits more fragrant than the growth of earthly paradise, and tangible objects in profusion of the fairest forms, and qualities to gratify and delight us. Grass will grow, flowers will bloom, fruits will ripen, forests will wave, rivers will flow, and rivulets dance.

High hills will tower, valleys will wind and plains will expand, and beyond them all, far as the eye can reach, vast blue oceans will for-

ever roll and sparkle in the sunlight of eternity.

Such we believe will be the glorious scenery of the heavenly city, where we shall join in the companionship of our loved ones, with the saints of all ages and with the holy angels; such the pastures green and the waters still of the sunrise land, beside which the Redeemer and Saviour will lead us forever.

Oh! how glorious the thought that yonder stars which nightly blaze in the depths of the empyrean, are the lights of heaven ever shining down upon us, the glittering lamps of the "many mansions" streaming across the darkness of the pilgrim way; and that ever and anon our eyes may even catch a distant gleam of the radiance of the celestial city itself, where dwelleth in light unapproachable the Blessed and only Potentate, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords; and where Christ, the Visible Representative of this Majesty Divine, standeth waiting to welcome His followers to the fulness of His presence and the glory of His matchless throne."

Then will be sung the "new song" by all the redeemed and saved. Its theme ever new—

the Father's sovereign love! Its keynote always, new,—Redemption through His Son's blood! Its harmony ever new,—the seraphic voices of saints attuned to the musical pitch of cherubim and seraphim! Its choristers ever new,—the glorified redeemed ones surrounding the Throne! Its singing galleries ever new,—the metropolis of the new earth—the Holy City, the New Jerusalem.

The new song's glad chorus,—"Unto Him Who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father; to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen."

"Life, we've been long together,
Through pleasant and through stormy weather,
'Tis hard to part when friends are dear,—
Perhaps 'twill cost a sigh, a tear;
Then steal away, give little warning, choose thine own time;
Say not 'Good Night,' but in some fairer clime
Bid me—'Good Morning.'"



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